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PIERRE TISNÉ

FRENCH PAINTING
**TWENTIETH CENTURY
PAINTERS**

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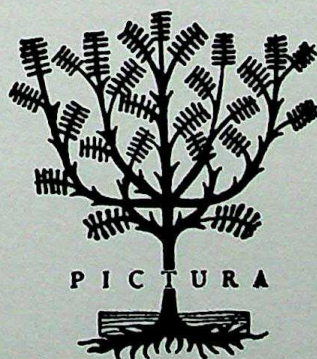
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BERNARD DORIVAL

TWENTIETH CENTURY PAINTERS

NABIS - FAUVES - CUBISTS

Translated by
W. J. STRACHAN



ÉDITIONS PIERRE TISNÉ
PARIS

THE ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

THE fact that our present civilisation has been undergoing a radical upheaval during the last seventy-five or hundred years is clearly shown by the development that poetry and music have been making since Baudelaire and Debussy. But what puts the matter beyond all doubt is the revolution in the plastic arts, and, oddly enough, in painting where, in the wake of Manet, Degas and the Impressionists, the most thorough, or at any rate the first complete revaluation has been initiated since the close of the Middle Ages. Seen from this angle, the last eight or ten decades in the art of painting mark as fundamental a renewal as the centuries which witnessed the crumbling of the Roman world or those which, from the time of Louis IX to that of Pope Leo X, saw the gradual replacement of the mediaeval system of aesthetics by that of the Renaissance.

Since the renewal of ancient thought had "informed" the Western world, art appeared in everybody's eyes as that *phuseôs mimesis* which Aristotle had defined, even when certain men such as Bossuet insisted that this "copy of nature" should be considered rather as its "embellishment". Artists therefore began to supply an image of the external world in their work, and they fulfilled this obligation by respecting human and animal form, thereby producing a faithful and scholarly rendering of anatomy with which, thanks to three decisive and basic inventions, they had come to terms. The first was perspective; linear perspective evolved by the Florentines of the quattrocento, aerial and colour perspective elaborated by the fifteenth century Flemish painters, an artifice, dare I say "trick", which gives the plane of the support on which the painting is done a supplementary dimension — spatial depth. The

second discovery was that of tactile values — modelling — to which Berenson has rightly attached a capital importance in his studies on the Renaissance Italians who were the first to want them and employ them systematically ; by their aid painters are able to create the illusion that the flat forms which they paint on the support possess thickness, that they are volumes, that they “turn” and take their place in all their density in the imaginary space that perspective produces. The third part of the system, *chiaroscuro*, Leonardo da Vinci’s invention, allows the painter to link these illusory volumes and fill this imaginary depth with the reality — most subtle but most important of all — that light is, or more exactly, the air with all the lights and shadows that inhabit it and render it visible. Fortified with these three resources, not forgetting also their knowledge of anatomy, painters were able to create an exact image of the exterior world. How accurately some of them have done this is proved by certain Italian painters of the sixteenth and Dutch painters of the seventeenth century whose brushes transformed the art of painting into a veritable illusionism — that is to say, an imitation of nature as advocated by the philosophers of antiquity.

But it is also something else, and the humanist, Francis Bacon, defined it *homo additus naturae*. An image of Nature, agreed, but a human image of this kind of nature and doubly human. First, because man, the centre, sovereign and measure of the universe in the opinion of humanist thought, also reigns in the picture of which he himself is the main subject: like the world of the Renaissance, painting, theocentric in the Middle Ages, became anthropocentric after the fifteenth century. And secondly in the sense that the imitation of nature which the painter produces in his pictures bears his mark, that is his mark as a human being. What is man? Every civilisation has put forward its own definition ; the Renaissance saw him as the “reasonable animal” suggested by Greek thought, the animal whose characteristic is that he is endowed with reason. So reason, the faculty of order, manifests its presence in painted work by the transformation of the chaos of Nature into an ordered and imaginable cosmos, and the composition of the picture began to be organized on a centre, to admit and demand a centripetal or centrifugal structure, to fit in with geometrical diagrams whose relationships can sometimes be expressed in mathematical formulas ; for to thinkers as different and opposed as Descartes and Pascal — but from this point of view no less children of humanist philosophy — are not figures and numbers the most characteristic of the thought of Man, Man whose particular gift, in Plato’s opinion, was to geometrize? Humanism thus completes the realism of painting which, as we can see clearly enough, is the faithful expression of rationalism and positivism essential to the Renaissance.

But once the time came when this rationalism and positivism showed signs of fatigue, realist and humanist painting was to totter on its foundations. This is in fact what happened towards the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

It is not now the moment to remind the reader how materialism, at its peak about 1850, was in less than thirty years to take cognizance of the fact that the Tarpeian rock was not all that distance away from the Capitol, nor shall we enlarge on how new philosophies, new literary movements and new ideas suggest new definitions of Nature and man. All that concerns us is that the art of the painter followed the general trend of Western thought¹, and, renouncing its former fundamental values, proposed new ones on which the latter has constructed the edifice of modern painting.

It is not possible of course to assign an exact date to the beginning of this revolution, which at first was only an evolution and proceeded in progressive stages. The author of a recent history of contemporary painting has felt justified in seeing its foundation in the work of Courbet in whom, however, others see, more legitimately perhaps, the end of the grand Caravaggio tradition — the artist in whom, for the last time, chiaroscuro and sculptural form reign supreme — a conservative painter who was responsible in point of fact for fewer innovations than Delacroix, Corot, Daumier, even Ingres, the young Ingres who added some supplementary vertebrae to his *Grande Odalisque*, a tacit admission to less concern with anatomical truth than with the requirements of rhythm. In our view it is Manet's painting which, despite its debt to the Renaissance Italians and the Spanish painters of the *Siglo de Oro*, seems to constitute the first really important break, the first fault, if you prefer, in the traditional art of painting. Simplification of the *métier*, abandonment of "values", tendency to flatten forms into those playing-card figures which Daumier had already remarked on — those decisive innovations are revealed in the painter of the *Piper*, who is, from this point of view a direct ancestor of the Fauves. And when Degas abandoned the normal horizontal angle of approach and looked at his subjects from either below or above, when he preferred to express space by the juncture of two diagonals inclined at 45° instead of through the movement of lines drawn in perspective towards a converging point, when he spurned the well-established traditional principle and relegated the chief points of interest to a corner of his canvas, showing only half the figure, intersected as it was by the frame, lending no more importance to the human figures than to the flowers in a bouquet, orchestral instruments or café-tables, he was likewise embarking on innovations bolder than any he could himself have devised but for the Japanese models he had seen.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the rôle played by the Ukiyo-e prints in the revival of Western painting. Practically unknown in Europe before the opening-up of modern Japan in 1854 at the time when they were beginning to find their way into France and when Baudelaire, Bracquemond, the Goncourt brothers, then Whistler, Fantin-Latour, Alfred Stevens, James Tissot noticed them in the *Porte Océane* shop opened by the Deloyes — husband and wife — in 1860 in the rue de Rivoli, they had the same decisive effect on French painting, *mutatis mutandis*, as the antiquities dug up in Tuscan or Roman² soil had on that of the Renaissance. They revealed all the artistic truths that nowadays are public property. That depth, for example, can be expressed by other means than that of geometric or aerial perspective, that felicitous effects can be obtained by "shots" taken from angles not normally seen in Western painting or by compositions deliberately off-centred, that intensity of colour need not necessarily be diminished with recession nor weakened by shadow, that line in the same way as description can be a suggestion and that a stroke of pen or brush by its thickness, thinness, elisions, curves or interruptions can indicate matter and form, that it is not high treason to show human figures from the back or in silhouette or as incidental to more important subjects, that the world still contains original sights which the Western world had neither looked at, noticed nor seen represented since the Renaissance. All these lessons Hokusai and Hiroshige and Kiyonaga, old or new masters of Japanese engraving, taught first to the Parisian painters of the end of the Second Empire and notably to Whistler and Degas, before

teaching them to the Impressionists and their successors, many of whose discoveries, and by no means the least important, were merely borrowed from the art of the Empire of the Rising Sun. Mme Thirion has proved the point beyond doubt in her as yet unpublished thesis of the École du Louvre.

The contribution of Impressionism — I mean Impressionism in the strict sense, that is, as practised by Claude Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Guillaumin almost all their lives and by Renoir roughly speaking between the years 1874 to 1883 — is no less considerable. The orthodox masters of this art, thanks to the discovery through their acute analysis of light, of the relativity of colour and form which, far from being fixed conditions, are continually modified by lighting and atmosphere, brought Man tumbling down from the throne on which the Renaissance had placed him. With them painting moves away so to speak from its anthropomorphic centre. But with them, too, and for the same reason, a new conception of space arises. It is conceived no longer as a geometrical medium but a medium of light which the painter can render by colour; colour which he no longer graduates as in traditional expression of aerial perspective but colour which is equally intense in the foreground and distance and aims not so much at rendering depth as the atmosphere which fills it and in expressing the latter, as a kind of corollary, signifies the former³. The Impressionists also assign another function to colour; it now becomes the rôle of colour — no longer that of values — to express light and shade, that is to say, the entire universe, since as far as they are concerned everything is light and shade. The external world consists therefore of nothing but colours, colours without values, pure chromatism.

Cézanne was to move further in this direction and apply himself to the expression of form through colour. When every plane of a structure received its own particular lighting, that is, appropriate colour, it was merely a matter of noting with exactitude the colour each plane should have and then volumes could be correctly constructed and situated *ipso facto* in the air. But in "architecting" these forms in this manner — and for Cézanne space is likewise a form which he constructs in the same way — the painter of *Les Grandes Baigneuses* discovers that the picture itself is a piece of architecture, or rather re-discovers this traditional truth that the Impressionists had forgotten. But from this old notion he deduces new consequences, of which two at least are of paramount importance: the first is that the requirements of this particular plastic truth should be preferred to those governing the external world and, secondly, that, rather than aim at a reproduction of human anatomy or the form of solid objects, we should interpret and distort both in accordance with the exigences of rhythm, expression, harmony and beauty⁴. And for the same reason, that is to make a more coherent, more unified microcosm of the picture, he does not hesitate to take similar liberties with perspective as he does with anatomy, and condense the planes. To achieve this he no longer considers all the objects and planes in his compositions from the same fixed view-point. He was unconsciously reverting to a procedure common in the Middle Ages which was blissfully ignorant of the Renaissance convention in accordance with which all the elements of a picture should be regarded from the same angle of vision by one motionless observer; he was also preparing the way for the multiplicity of view-points which the Cubists were to make into one of the main principles of their art.

About the year 1885, then, arose a new conception — the picture that is not an image of the exterior world (how far we have moved in ten years from Claude Monet's "window opened on to Nature"!) but a universe that possesses a nature of its own, obeying particular laws and directed towards an end which they agreed at the time should be "decorative" — decorative and expressive. Expressive in the power which lines, colours and rhythms have of evoking feelings by virtue of "correspondences" that Symbolism specialized in at that time.

It is in this particular that Neo-Impressionism differs radically from Impressionism ; that the art of Toulouse-Lautrec is opposed to that of Degas, that the "Closeness" of Anquetin and Émile Bernard proves a fruitful source of innovations which it was to remain for Gauguin to exploit more successfully. But the importance of his contribution does not rest solely on this liking for decoration which is ever present and leads him to repudiate perspective once and for all, renounce modelling, abolish values and chiaroscuro in favour of flat forms (Cézanne was to refer to Chinese shadows in that connection ; it would have been more accurate to have described them as Japanese shadows!) in a two-dimensional universe, nor does it consist solely in the doctrine of double distortion which it advocates — objective distortion, to incorporate the world of depth in the picture-plane, subjective, to assert the painter's *Weltanschauung* through the medium of an *emotional caricature*, to use Maurice Denis' expression. Gauguin's importance, still more than in a return to archaic and exotic art, which acted as a purifying bath in the Fountain of Youth ("Barbaric art is a rejuvenation for me" admitted the painter of the *Yellow Christ*) appears to me above all in the fact that he was the first painter to take cognizance of the break that he and his fellow artists were making between their art and the art of tradition, and that, what is more, he himself was very deliberately and consciously in favour of it. "The great mistake was the Greeks", he declared, implicating also in this condemnation the Romans, the Italians of the Renaissance and everything derived from them, and it was no coincidence that he entitled one of his works *Bonjour, Monsieur Gauguin*. Using this title was tantamount to issuing a challenge to the celebrated *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet*, thereby opposing the "irrealist" aesthetic system, the foundations of which he was freely and deliberately laying, to the "realist" aesthetic which had inspired his predecessor.

There are really only two artists, Van Gogh and Redon, whose work can be compared with that of Gauguin from the point of view of historical importance. They both share the ideas of the period concerning the symbolism of lines, colours and forms and on the need for an art which, thanks to the use of double distortion referred to, is equally expressive. Their essential originality lies in the fact that they conceived of painting as an instrument of knowledge, a means in the same way as science, philosophy or religion — of arriving at an understanding of the hidden nature of people and objects and also of the great philosophic problems. In letter number 576 which Van Gogh addressed to his brother Théo, he compared himself with the Pythoness and described himself as "twisted by... prophecy". It was an accurate description. His painting is, in the etymological sense of the word, primarily an "apocalypse", that is — as opposed to an imitation of the appearances of the palpable world — the revelation of the essence of people and things. Perhaps it is something further — a figuration of that essential existence of the universe, that perpetual creation which

animates the *Irises* of the Saint-Remy Asylum garden no less than the stars in the *Starry Night* immortalised in his words, "I cannot, sick man that I am, dispense with something greater than myself which is my life, the capacity to create", as he wrote one day, thereby revealing the significance of his painting as something which was the very opposite of a representation of Nature, a creation parallel to Creation itself.

Redon's work holds a similar meaning in that he is trying to wrest the secrets out of flowers, monsters, masks, legends, and dogmas and with their aid to return to the origin of things (*Origins* is the title of one of his albums of prints) to the very roots of life itself. The more so as he too, far from imitating Nature according to its outward appearance, aimed at imitating it in its creativeness, and giving life and being to his work, as creation does to what it creates. The most important statement in Redon's work is that the picture must be an organic thing in itself in the way that plants and animals are organic. In this respect he anticipates Paul Klee as he forestalls the Surrealists in his visions, his liking for dreams and his abandonment to the irrational, and the Abstract school in the musical basis of his painting, consisting, as it does, of mere patches of colour and suggestion of melody.

It is not therefore merely the aesthetics and technique of painting which were re-thought between the years 1860 and 1890, but its whole philosophy. It is in fact a renewed painting that Manet, Degas and the Impressionists on the one hand, but especially, on the other, Cézanne, Redon and the masters of the generation of 1850 — Gauguin (1848), Van Gogh (1858) and Seurat (1859), to mention only the three greatest — bequeathed to their successors whose lot it has been to continue and complete their work.

THE NABIS

OF the great precursors of contemporary painting — Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin — it is the latter who was the first to exercise his influence, not only in the sense that a galaxy of artists gathered round him at Pont Aven in 1886 and still more later on at Le Pouldu and acknowledged him as their leader, but because it was his painting more than any other that launched the Nabi movement.

The adventure began at Pont Aven on that September or October day in 1888 when Paul Sérusier had executed a landscape on a cigar-box lid following out Gauguin's directions: "How do you see that tree?" Gauguin had said, in front of an edge of the *Bois d'Amour*. "It's green, isn't it? Put in green then, the best green on your palette — and that shadow, blue really. Don't hesitate to paint it as blue as possible." In this way, if we are to believe Maurice Denis⁴, "an amorphous landscape in accordance with this synthetic formula had been coloured violet, vermillion, emerald green and other pure colours squeezed straight out of the tube, almost without any addition of zinc white". — the now famous "talisman" (as Sérusier called it) which its author brought back to Paris and showed with a great deal of mystery to some of his favourite students at the beginning of the new session at the Académie Julian where he was a pupil teacher.

Thus Bonnard, Denis, Ibels and Ranson were converted to the Gauguin gospel and became enthusiastic proselytes who in their turn converted their friends of the École des Beaux-Arts, Roussel and Vuillard. They decided to form a group which at the suggestion of one of their friends, the Hebraist, Cazalis, they baptised "Nabi" (which means a prophet in Hebrew), partly in jest, for the sake of having an out-of-the-way appellation but partly, too, in earnest, in order to demonstrate their wish to regenerate painting as the Prophets of old had periodically regenerated Israel.

In 1891 two further names were added to the group, that of a Dutchman, Verkade, who had arrived in Paris in February and that of a Dane, Mogens Ballin whom Verkade met at the banquet given in Gauguin's honour, 23rd March. In 1892 the sculptor Georges Lacombe was attracted to the movement which the Hungarian painter, Rippl-Ronai, his friend Aristide Maillol and shortly afterwards, the Swiss, Vallotton, were to join the same year.

Once a month the Nabis met for dinner at a modest restaurant *L'Os à Moëlle* in the Impasse Brady. They also met every Saturday in the studio of their married colleague, Paul Ranson, at 25, boulevard Montparnasse. They referred to it jocularly as "the Temple", produced charades and puppet-plays there, listened to music, received Gauguin on three or four occasions and entered into passionate discussions on artistic problems. An atmosphere of friendliness and gaiety prevailed at these reunions; each of them was given a nickname; Denis was called "Nabi of the beautiful ikons", Bonnard, the "Japanese Nabi", Sérusier, "the Nabi with the red beard", Verkade, the "Nabi of the Obelisk", Vuillard, more discreetly, the "Zouave", Ranson's wife the "Sacred light of the Temple".

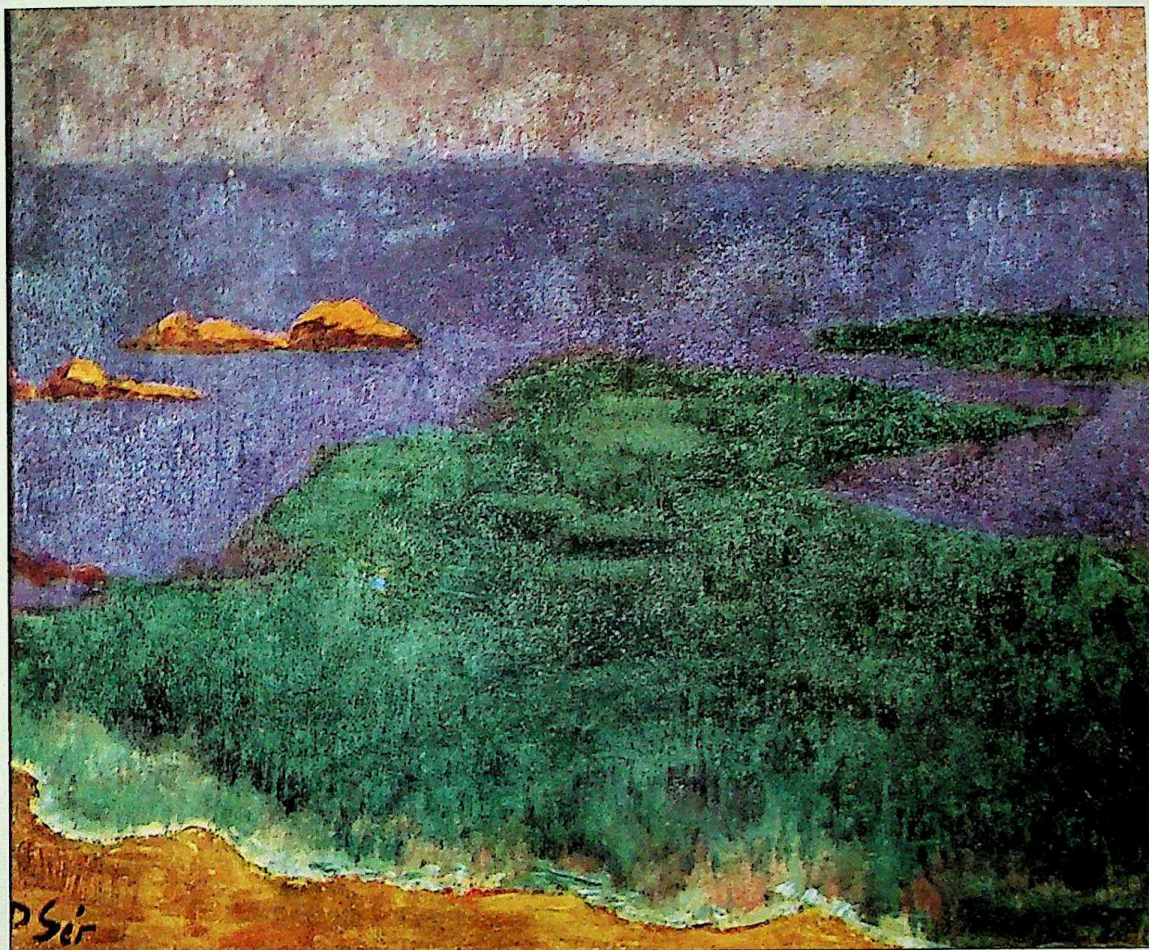
These were not the only Nabi meeting-places. They also met in the studio, 23 rue Pigalle, that Bonnard, Denis and Vuillard shared with the young actor, Lugné-Poë, in 1891; the offices of the *Mercure de France*, inaugurated in January, 1890, and those of the *Revue Blanche* which, founded in Brussels in 1889, moved to Paris the following year, and, financed by the brothers Natanson, set up its headquarters in the rue des Martyrs on 1st October, 1891. Vuillard held his first exhibition there in November and December that year. The gallery in the rue Le Peletier, directed by Le Barc de Boutteville, was likewise one of their meeting-places. They hung their pictures there regularly in 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896 in the majority of the thirteen exhibitions which were organized there. Later, when they became successful, Ambroise Vollard in 1897 and 1898, Durand-Ruel the following year, Bernheim the younger and his son in 1900, opened their galleries to the Nabis who also exhibited in the various Paris Salons. Salons des Indépendants in 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1901, 1902, etc. Salon de la Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1901 etc.; not forgetting the Brussels exhibitions in which they took part in 1892, 1893, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1901, etc...

Salons and galleries were not the only platforms on which they showed themselves to the public. The theatre proper, in which their interest was as enthusiastic as it was enlightened, also provided them with opportunities. The *Théâtre d'Art*, founded by Paul Fort in 1890, included them among its collaborators. Antoine likewise sought their aid, especially that of Ibels who became the acknowledged lithographer of the *Théâtre Libre* programmes. But it was the work of the *Maison de l'Œuvre* that claimed the Nabis' particular interest. They painted the scenery, lithographed the programmes of the majority of the plays that Lugné-Poë put on in 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896 and 1897, and they even went so far as to take parts — walking-on ones it is true — in Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. Wherever any efforts were being made to revive the French theatre the Nabis were present and active.

Nor did they confine their interest to the plastic arts. Enlightened amateurs of music, they associated with Chausson, Debussy, Claude Terrasse, Pierre Hermand. Philosophy also appealed to them and theosophy still more, and theology in which these years had witnessed a revival and a considerable vogue. Devoted readers of the *Grands Initiés* by Edouard Schuré, published in 1889, they went to the *Trois Cocottes*, 222, faubourg Saint-Honoré — to hear the Reverend Father Janvier speak to them about Saint Thomas as Sérusier did about Plotinus. They joined in the spiritual movement so characteristic of that period and with such conviction that the Protestant Verkade and the Jew Ballin were converted to catholicism in 1892 and 1893 respectively, the former to become a benedictine monk at Beuron in Germany, the latter to die in the odour of sanctity.

Catholics like them and Denis, mystics like Sérusier, laymen and agnostics like Ranson, Roussel, Vallotton, they all shared a common and lively interest in literature, the course of which they followed with intelligence, showing a marked predilection for the second Symbolist movement and Neo-Naturalism, the latter having the backing of the *Revue Blanche*. Friends of Gide and Francis Jammes, Jules Renard and Jarry, Edouard Dujardin no less than of Tristan Bernard, they illustrated their books, and contributed drawings to reviews that published them, *Plume*, *Mercure de France*, and, in particular, the *Revue Blanche*.

Neither the summer season nor holidays were allowed to interfere with their contacts with one another. In 1891 Sérusier, Verkade and Ballin were in Brittany,



PAUL SÉRUSIER — THE SEA AT LE POULDU, CIRCA 1889 — (0,38; 0,46) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

at Pont-Aven and Huelgoat; Thadée Natanson and his wife, Missia, who rented a house at Valvins, received Vuillard and Vallotton (1895), who in their turn, visited Mallarmé whose "Tuesdays" they had attended since 1890. Later at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne where they had settled for the summers of 1896 to 1899, the same hosts received Bonnard, Vuillard, Roussel, not forgetting Toulouse-Lautrec. It was at the Château Romanel above Lake Geneva in the canton of Vaud in 1900 that Vallotton and Vuillard spent their holidays in the company of the picture dealer, Josse Hessel and his wife, Lucie. And on Sundays in the spring, the Parisian Nabis went to St-Germain-en-Laye where Maurice Denis had been living with his young wife since 1893, or to L'Étang-la-Ville, where Roussel had resided since 1899.

In this way a friendship was consolidated which — the phenomenon is unusual enough to deserve mention — proof against religious and political differences, was



MAURICE DENIS - SOIR TRINITAIRE. 1891 - (1,06;
0,745) COLL. MADAME DEJEAN, LOUVECIENNES

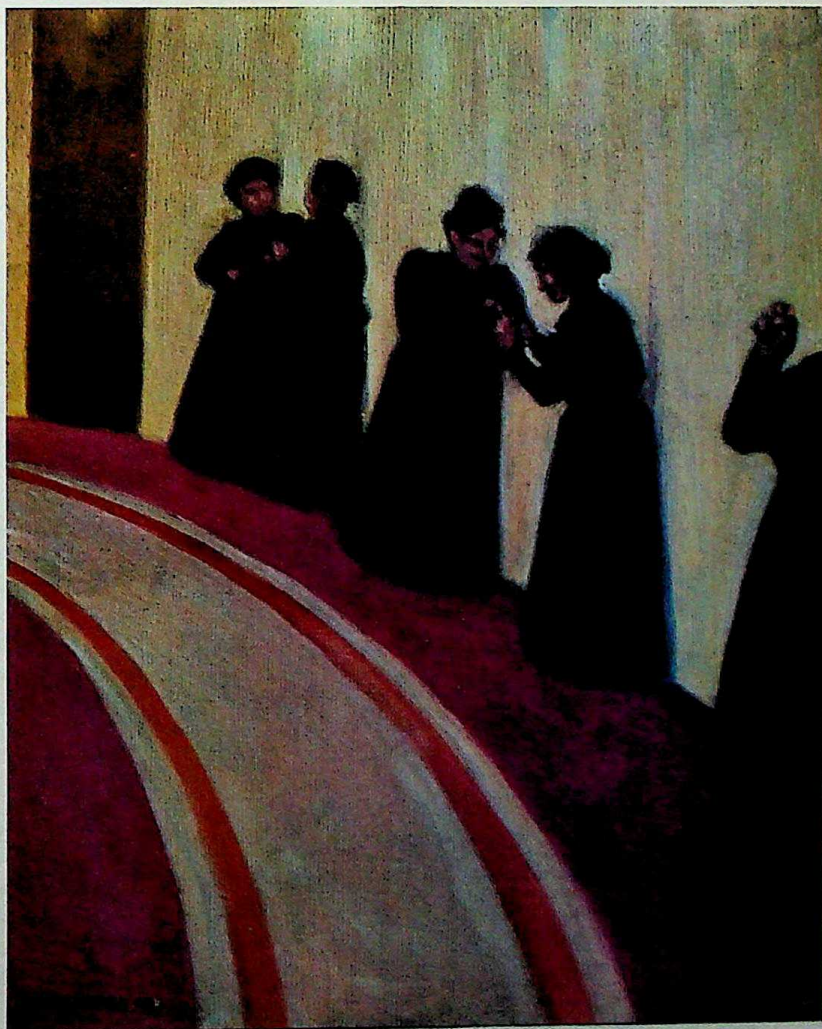
to last all their lives, and survive even divergent views on art which from 1895 onwards and still more after 1900 were to introduce such oppositions of ideas in the Nabis' work, that Nabism as a comprehensive term became a misnomer.

Very different from each other, even in the years when the group was most closely knit, all the Nabis shared nevertheless certain aesthetic principles and certain enthusiasms.

We find these principles formulated chiefly in the review *Art et Critique*. They were formulated moreover by one of themselves, Maurice Denis, who published a very important article, dated 23 August 1890, under the pseudonym Pierre Louis. But they also come to our notice — in the form of an authorized echo at any rate — in

other articles, those for example that Albert Aurier published in the *Mercur de France*, March 1891 and in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of 1st April 1892 or, again, in that little work of André Melléro's, the *Mouvement idéaliste en peinture*, published in 1896.

The first of the fundamental notions of the Nabis is that "realism is one of those errors which we invariably find in the worst periods of universal art, when it has reached its decadent and sterile stages" and that whatever form realism takes, we should make a radical break with it, even if it took the hypocritical form of idealisation whose champions, according to Aurier, "have satisfied themselves with arranging their objectivity in accordance with certain conventional and prejudiced notions of quality... What they dubbed ideal was never anything other than ugly realities, cunningly disguised". Following this condemnation on the part of these second-hand



FÉLIX VALLOTTON - OUVREUSES
AT THE ODÉON - 1909 - (0,46;
0,38) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

Ingres, comes that of the Bonnats, Detailles, Bouguereaus who through the mouthpiece of the latter professed that "there is no such thing as symbolic art, social art, religious art ; truth-to-nature is the only art for an artist who follows the exclusive ideal of expressing the natural truth". In point of fact it was indispensable in Nabi eyes to reject with horror the sort of academic naturalism which professes that you must "simply paint what you see¹⁰" and reproduce reality in a photographic way without any attempt at interpretation ; and Maurice Denis maliciously recalls the saying of one of his professors, a hardened champion of this official realism who condemned a nude which he had painted with a certain stylisation of the modelling: "You would not go to bed with that woman...". But he also insisted on getting away from the realism of the Impressionists whose aim "is still the imitation of matter... with its perceived form, its perceived colour ; it is still the rendering of the sensation with all the unlooked-for effects of an instantaneous notation¹¹" and whom Denis reproves particularly for their anxiety to imitate nature, and even more for their irritating mania for modelling it¹²". What he is attacking then is the whole belief that art is the imitation of nature.

The point is that as far as the Nabis are concerned "Art is first and foremost a means of expression, a creation of our mind for which Nature merely supplies the pretext¹³", the interpretation by the artist of the facts of the external world over which he must assert his sovereignty. If this external world is merely an appearance behind which the real truths are hidden, if the objects it offers to our sight are only "the letters of a vast alphabet", signs — and, Albert Aurier goes on to say, "the sign... is nothing in itself" — the artist "must carry out a reasoned stylisation..., in his work utilize only lines, forms, general and distinctive colours which serve to state clearly the meaning of the object... exaggerate, attenuate, distort them not only in accordance with his personal vision, as they emerge from the moulds of his own subjectivity, but further... according to the needs of the Idea which has to be expressed¹⁴". Thus Maurice Denis, giving judgement in 1909 on the works painted by the Nabis twenty years before, was to be able to write of them that "art instead of being the representation, became the subjective deformation of nature¹⁵".

But if this theory of subjective deformation, "with expression as the aim, authorized any transposition even to the point of caricature, any excess of character", another deformation, objective deformation, "obliged the artist in his turn to transform everything into beauty". What is the condition of this beauty? Essentially it is the harmony of the work with the spirit of art, the harmony of the picture with the laws of the *genre*, the laws which Nature itself and the function of painting impose. Now one of these is to cover with lines, colour and form a plane that exists only in two dimensions, and the other to decorate a wall ; and Denis no less than Aurier insisted on this double truth that had been neglected for centuries, when they wrote respectively "remember that a picture before being the portrait of a nude woman, a war-horse or a anecdote, is essentially a plane surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order¹⁷" and "Decorative painting is true painting; painting could only have been invented for the purpose of decorating poems, dreams and ideas, the mural commonplaces of human edifices¹⁸". This may be a limited interpretation of beauty, doubtless, but it is characteristic of a time when, as one of its witnesses, the Nabi painter Jean Verkade, said towards the beginning of 1890: "no more easel-paintings. Down with useless furniture... Give us walls, to decorate...! There are no pictures, only decorations¹⁹". They were part and parcel of the general

movement which caused the whole period after years of pastiche to create a new and original decorative style of its own. What William Morris and Aubrey Beardsley aimed at and brought about in England; what the promoters of the *Jugendstil* did in Germany and likewise those of the *Secession* in Vienna who were in spiritual harmony with the promoters of *Art Nouveau* (from Paris or Nancy), the Nabis attempted to introduce into France. And there, through them, for the first time since the Middle Ages, decorative art passed to the attack against imitative art and endeavoured to impose its laws on painting.

Nor was there any danger that these painters who aimed at decoration would confine themselves to producing attractive objects to look at but deprived of any human significance or implication. For the Nabis were convinced of the theory of "equivalents" which Maurice Denis had formulated in the following terms: "There existed a close correspondence between forms and emotions! Phenomena imply states of soul which is symbolism. Matter became expressive and the flesh became word²⁰". If form, colour, line, "correspond" — to use the terms beloved of the symbolist poets — to feelings which they express, the work of art is the reflection of the interior world, to which it gives access; search for beauty, be it only decorative beauty, does not prevent the artist from loading the picture with a profound emotion and spiritual sense: decoration is an echo and suggestion of the Idea.

Inspired though these aesthetic principles were by theories in vogue during this period of Symbolism, they had also been greatly influenced by the example of certain painters with whom the Nabis claimed affinity. Gauguin doubtless was the chief one of these, but they associated their admiration of him with the name of one of the four contemporaries who exercised a great influence over them. This was Cézanne whose canvases they had been admiring in "Père Tanguy's" shop (the only place in Paris where he was shown) ever since 1890 and whose exhibition, organised by Ambroise Vollard in his gallery in November and December 1895, they subsequently attended. Denis, who went to see him later at Aix, in 1906 made an open confession of his own admiration and that of his friends for the painter of *The Card Players*, the whole art of which was "a transposition, an emotional equivalent", "a caricature of the impact of a sensation, or, in more general terms, a psychological fact", and therefore the ancestor of Symbolism and all painting imbued with the "belief in a correspondence between exterior forms and subjective states²¹". It was for the same reason that they appreciated the art of Redon whom they visited as assiduously in Paris as in the country. (Vuillard was his guest and portraitist at Saint-Georges-de-Didonne in Charente-Maritime in 1901) and Redon himself executed admirable lithographs of the faces of Bonnard, Denis, Sérusier and Vuillard between 1900 and 1903. "Odilon Redon", writes Maurice Denis²² "had also searched beyond the copying of nature and sensation for the plastic equivalents of his emotions and his dreams". Hence his ascendancy over the young Nabis. Nor were they any less susceptible to the influence of Puvis de Chavannes whose Sorbonne mural decorations won the praise of Maurice Denis and whose *Poor Fisherman* was copied by Maillol. They found in him too "the sufficiency of his lines and colours to account for their own divine beauty²³". As for Degas of whom Maurice Denis left a charming portrait done in 1904, Vallotton, Vuillard, Bonnard had long been examining his art, and decided that what they derived from it were lessons in composition, graphic precision,



ÉDOUARD VUILLARD - UNDER THE LAMP. 1892 - (0,32; 0,40) MUSÉE DE L'ANNONCIADE, SAINT-TROPEZ

artificial lighting and also a certain "vulgarity", gloomy humour, which they turned to the best use.

But were they in point of fact following his example when they indulged in their daring typographical lay-outs, calligraphy, irony or was it that of the Japanese? The answer is not made any easier by the fact that they knew, loved passionately and indeed emulated the art of the Empire of the Rising Sun. They attended the exhibition of Japanese art which had opened at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts 27th April 1890, where in addition to Hokusai with whose work the French were already familiar, appeared the old masters of the Ukiyo-e, still almost unknown in France, and where to the prints were added "kakemonos", then revealed



PIERRE BONNARD - FIGURE UNDER THE LAMP. CIRCA 1896 - (0,615; 0,735) PRIVATE COLLECTION, BERNE

to the public for the first time. They also frequented the shop of Bing which housed his admirable collection of Japanese woods ; and some of the Nabis, Sérusier, Vuillard and above all Bonnard, whom his friends had nicknamed the "Jap-Nabi", bought and cherished some of those Japanese prints. As for the influence on them of the products of this far-distant culture, many paintings confess and even proclaim it aloud. Bonnard would certainly not have painted his *Peignoir* (1891) if it had not been for "Kakemonos", nor Maurice Denis his *Portrait of Mme Ranson* (1893); the example of the Japanese triptychs inspired Vallotton to execute his triptych *Bon Marché* (1898) just as that of Japanese screens inspired Bonnard to paint some about the year 1891 and lithograph others in 1899. Paintings like Bonnard's *Check Blouse*

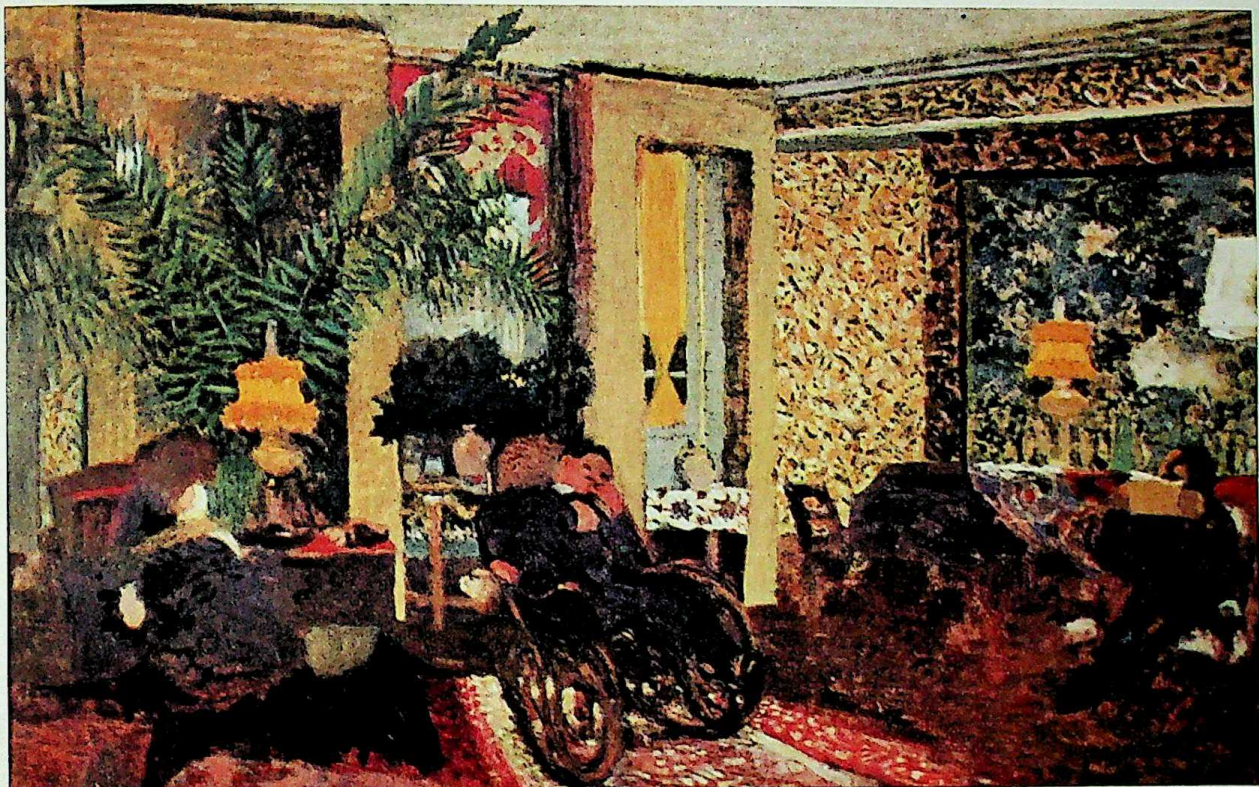
(1892) or Vuillard's *Dressmakers under the Lamp* (1891) are in fact closely related to certain prints of the "Ukiyo-e".

The Nabis were susceptible to other exotic influences as well as to that of Japanese art. Maurice Denis, for example, drew inspiration from "batiks" of Java — which he collected — in his *Portrait of the Melléro Family* (1894). And they were influenced above all by the art of the Middle Ages: carvings, preferably popular and rustic, some fine pieces of which Maurice Denis had discovered in Brittany; paintings that the same artist judged in these terms: "clumsy though they are, the charm of their conventions lies in their spontaneity, variety, sincerity and feeling that life is good; fifteenth century tapestry, the floral backgrounds of which no doubt suggested to Vuillard his own variegated or patterned backgrounds; prints, the survival and echo of which they liked to find in popular prints including those of Épinal. They considerably extended the range of appreciation and diversity of models, and it must not be counted one of their least merits that by fixing their attention, they also fixed ours on forms of art, little known and even despised before their time.

What fruit in fact did these models and these reflections on art produce? Widely divergent works, so divergent in fact that it is somewhat difficult to deduce from them what the Nabis have in common.

Right from the start, the group take two stands; these are the painters, Sérusier, Maurice Denis, Verkade, Ballin, Lacombe, Ranson whose eyes are turned still more towards Gauguin and the arts of the French Middle Ages; and that of the artists Bonnard, Vuillard, Vallotton who look more towards Degas and the Japanese. In the first group, subjects inspired from Brittany or the past, mediaeval as well as Biblical, the past of fairy tales no less than of the scriptures; a striving after archaic effects to the point of assuming an artificial crudity; a certain mannerism and an extremely conscious hankering after the poetry of the weird and legendary which the novelty and candour of their approach helps them to satisfy; in other words a kinship with the literature of a Maeterlinck and a Francis Jammes. The second group find their subjects on the other hand in the Paris street, the house or contemporary life and everyday reality. They are imbued with the spirit of "modernity" that Vuillard, Bonnard and Vallotton — following the example of Degas — take good care not to despise, finding too much poetry in them to neglect these rich sources. The casual freedom with which they treat these intimate subjects, their taste for the unexpected, the droll, the absurd allow them to spice them with a touch of irony which recalls Jules Renard. There is then a sharp distinction between the two groups.

But we must not exaggerate it. Sérusier did in fact introduce a Bonnard-like humour in some of his Breton scenes, *The Shower* of 1895, for example, and Denis frequently forsook the world of the Gospels or symbolist poets for that of contemporary reality — above all that of the family which has inspired chapters of an intimacy as charming (if possibly a little sugary) as those of his friend Vuillard — I have particularly in mind his *Little Girl with Hen* (1890), his *Portrait of Eva Meurier in a green Dress* (1891), his *Menuet de la Princesse Maleine* (1891), his *Nativité de Jean-Paul* (1895), etc. And even in the sacred subjects which he liked so much does not his originality lie in the intimate manner in which he treats them and transfers them into his own period? Thus his *Sancta Martha* of 1893, his good *Good Samaritan at*



ÉDOUARD VUILLARD - INTERIOR. 1899 - (0,585; 0,94) PRIVATE COLLECTION, ZÜRICH

Fourqueux of 1894, above all his *Pilgrims of Emmaus* of 1895 in which the resurrected Christ and his two disciples become a family supper in a house at St-Germain-en-Laye laden with the same tenderness, respect and even contemplative spirit with which Vuillard endows his many paintings of middle-class supper-parties. There is then no gap between the Sérusier-Denis group and the Bonnard-Vuillard group, and this is so especially as Nabis like Roussel and Maillol act as a bridge between them, the former painting allegorical scenes such as the *Four Seasons* (1891) in the modernist intimate manner beloved of his brother-in-law and the latter contemporary faces in a style borrowed from the *quattrocento*—complete profiles against a background of decorative foliage. Varied by a sympathetic and healthy variety, which is the best proof that it is neither doctrinaire nor pedantic, the art of the Nabis none the less possesses enough common ground for us to feel justified in making no attempt to separate Bonnard from Denis, Vuillard from Sérusier, Vallotton from Maillol.

Thus the difficulty of defining Nabism is due perhaps more to their divergence of temperament than to the fact that the Nabis developed a great deal even between 1888 and 1895 and carried out a year of experiments that greatly differed from those they had pursued the previous year.

What a variety we see therefore in Vuillard's painting! He abandons the analytical traditionalism that he practised before seeing the *Talisman* which had inspired his exquisite *Self-Portrait* and *Nature Morte à la Salade* of the Musée d'Art Moderne and in 1890 prefers to paint works of an exaggerated synthetism, violently coloured, and of a boldness which foreshadows (and perhaps surpasses) that of the Fauves. His *Bois de Boulogne* (1890) that Fénéon owned, his *Octagonal Self-Portrait* of 1891, *Lady of Fashion*, *Plage violette*, *Girls out for a Walk*, *Vase with Lilac*, etc., show him intoxicated with intense or deep colours, juxtaposing extensive areas of red and green, opposing blues to yellow ochres, in his quest for the density and brilliance of a tone which he forces on occasions, breaking away from his old style or making contrasts by the use of small dots perhaps borrowed from the technique of the Neo-Impressionists. His *Colliers moored in the Seine* thus derive from Seurat and Signac.

But then about 1892 this appetite for colour yields to a no less marked passion for black: the *Dressmakers under the Lamp* of the Saint-Tropez museum, the *Women in an Interior* of the Winterthur Kunstmuseum (1890), his picture in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, of his mother and sister, testify to his predilection for a tone which, at this period, he treats as a colour, obtaining from its use effects of amazing boldness and intensity. Münch had not yet approached anywhere near this point.

The year 1894 marks a return to colour, no longer violent now but clear and fresh, somewhat mat or acid, gay and wan as on the Ukiyo-e prints. The decorations made for Alexandre Natanson on the theme of the *Paris Gardens* and also of the *Parc* were executed in this key.

Then shortly afterwards, Vuillard began to prefer neutral tones—greys, beiges, earth colours, ochres with which he orchestrates symphonies of a subtlety as delightful as it is perfect. Sometimes black or sometimes the high notes of pure colours intervene. But more often than not, which is the case in the finest, most skilful and most original canvases, only those minor tones dominate which Vuillard—and this is where his great originality lies—treats as colours and not as values and which he manipulates as he did his reds, blues, greens, blacks. Among examples of this technique are those wonderful masterpieces the *Door*, the *Bench*, the *Umbrella*, etc.

A similar diversity can be seen in Bonnard who in 1890 when he paints his brilliant and witty *Revue* seems to share Sérusier's taste for pure colour. He draws his picture in vermilions, Prussian blues, yellows. But this love of a gay and light key which is equally eloquent in the *Portrait of André Bonnard* (1890), the *Check Blouse* (1892), the *Skating* (1892) had to battle against an equal fondness for dull tones and blacks which inspire the painter with the enchanting harmonies of his *Terrasse Family* (1892), his *Woman's head* of the Hans R. Hahnloser Collection (1893), his *Child at Table* (1895) and which finally triumphed about the year 1896 when he executed his *Game of Cards* of the Renard Collection, his *14 juillet* of the Leten Collection, his *Figure under the Lamp*, reproduced here.

Are we to conclude from the development of Vuillard and Bonnard from high tones to a subdued key that all the Nabis between 1889 and 1895 followed the same road? Far from it. Sérusier in point of fact remained faithful with a few exceptions to brilliant colours of subdued opulence which he handled with an audacity unparalleled at this time outside the work of Gauguin. He anticipated and outdid the Münch paintings of this period when he harmonised the violets and blues, greens and yellows of his *Sea at Le Pouldu* (1889), reproduced here. And, taking Cézanne

and Gauguin as his point of departure in his *Still life in the Studio* of 1891, a powerful symphony in reds and blues set off by cool greens, he anticipates Matisse and Derain of the Fauve period. As for Denis who passes from the fresh key of his *Catholic Mystery* (1890) to the subdued harmonies of his *Soir Trinitaire* (1891) — a poem in blues which the Picasso of 1903 was to remember — he lingers for a few agreeable years among the minor harmonies of his *Sancta Martha* (1893), *Muses*, *Girl looking like a Page* (1894). Then in 1895 he appeared to discover the colour that Vuillard had just renounced. His *Ile Tudy*, *Port du Pecq* are painted in a key that is both dull yet brilliant, seeming to indicate the painter's return towards Gauguin.

Thus, there was no common evolution which led the whole group from pure colours to half-tones or contrariwise. Much less dependent on one another than the Fauves or Cubists, who moved so to speak *en bloc*, the Nabis travelled more freely. We shall now endeavour to define Nabism.

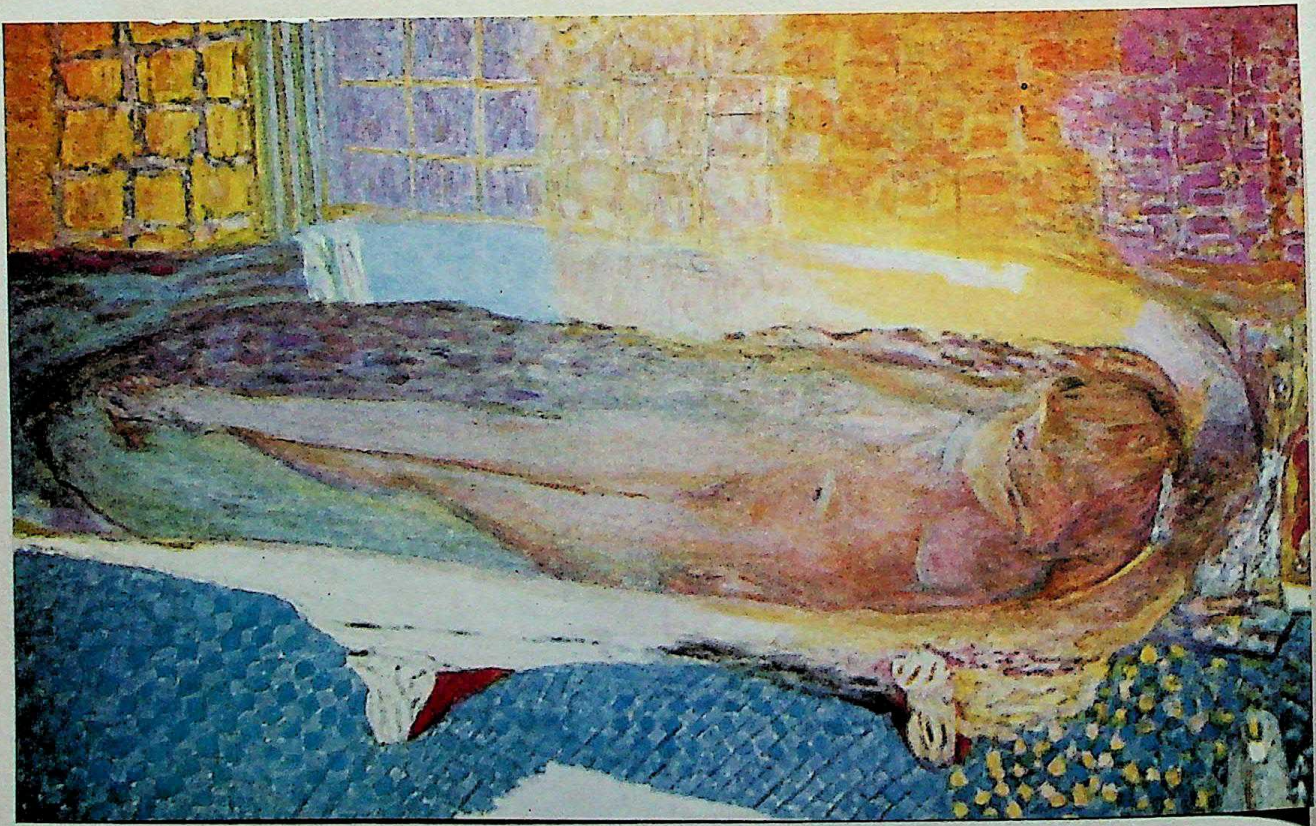
We discover in it first of all a general characteristic: it is the emphasis on the synthetic approach, a point in which it contrasts with Impressionism and one which leads all its representatives to simplify line and colour in order the better to define the object. "The exact line enveloping the form"²⁴, a legacy from the Primitives and Japanese—contour and arabesque—encloses patches of colour unified on one note and generally applied flat, as in the pochoir. Thus the form declares its presence, which is all the more necessary in that it is the artist's wish to reduce it to a silhouette by flattening it as much as possible and leaving it unmodelled. How was this to be accomplished? A solid form that "turns" requires a hollow space, — and the Nabis were all agreed to abolish perspective, superpose one plane on another instead of disposing the planes in a series one behind the other, in a word, to emphasise the two-dimensional character of their support and transform their painting into the art of decorating a flat surface. As decorative art, like Nature before Pascal's time, abhors a vacuum, they avoid all dead zones and cover the entire surface of their picture with these flat forms, fitting one piece into another like a jigsaw puzzle. If they wish to paint a landscape, they raise the skyline as high as possible, and the thin strip of sky is peopled with clouds or branches. In their interiors, the backgrounds are decorated with sprays of foliage, marblings and speckles, similar to those of the wall-papers to be seen in middle-class town and country houses and flats of that period. The eye can find no repose; clothes have check patterns, the floors are dotted with flowers or chequered with sunlight in patterns of well-defined contours, the sea is animated with waves, the waves are edged with foam; there is no space anywhere. The result is a little difficult to "read". Nor is it helped by the fact that the experts of the movement favoured original presentations, novel compositions in which certain forms, broadly conceived, others excessively diminished, are more difficult to recognise inasmuch as they encroach on others. Even the human element loses its autonomy and superiority in their work. Merely a part and parcel of the whole picture, it cannot claim any greater rôle than that assigned for example to the leaves in the trees, the flecks of sunlight on the ground, the flowers on the dress a person may wear, or the umbrella with which he protects himself. Thus begins that decline in importance of the human element already foreshadowed by Impressionism; it is the end of the reign of that "anthropocentrism" which had been traditional in painting since the Renaissance.

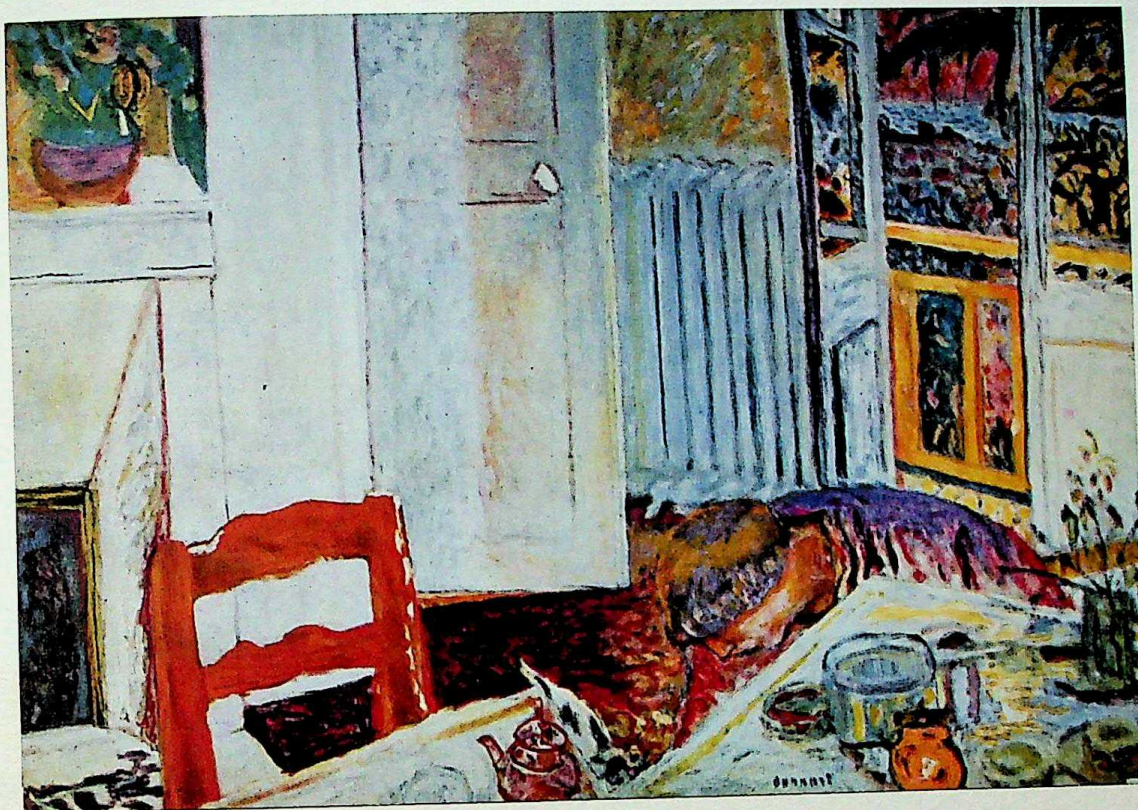
From this time onwards a picture of this school can be deciphered only by a close inspection. To see it properly you have to look at it for a long time. Thus it does not make the immediate impact on us that painting had been wont to make; its effect is slower, requiring time as an ally. That is to say that it partakes to some extent of the nature of music with which the Nabis were enamoured and which exercised a kind of domination over all the arts, and poetry in particular, at that time. The plastic equivalent of the effort of the Symbolists who through the mouth of Verlaine demanded.

“De la musique avant toute chose”

are then these Nabi pictures in which the dangers of the decorative are exorcised by the musical element, and which, thanks to their musical qualities, gain that poetic and human significance which their decorative ambitions might well have exiled from their work. Well before Cubist painting, Nabi painting, to repeat Apollinaire's²⁵ famous words, was “to painting, as it had been envisaged hitherto, what music is to literature... *pure painting*, in the same way as music is *pure literature*”.

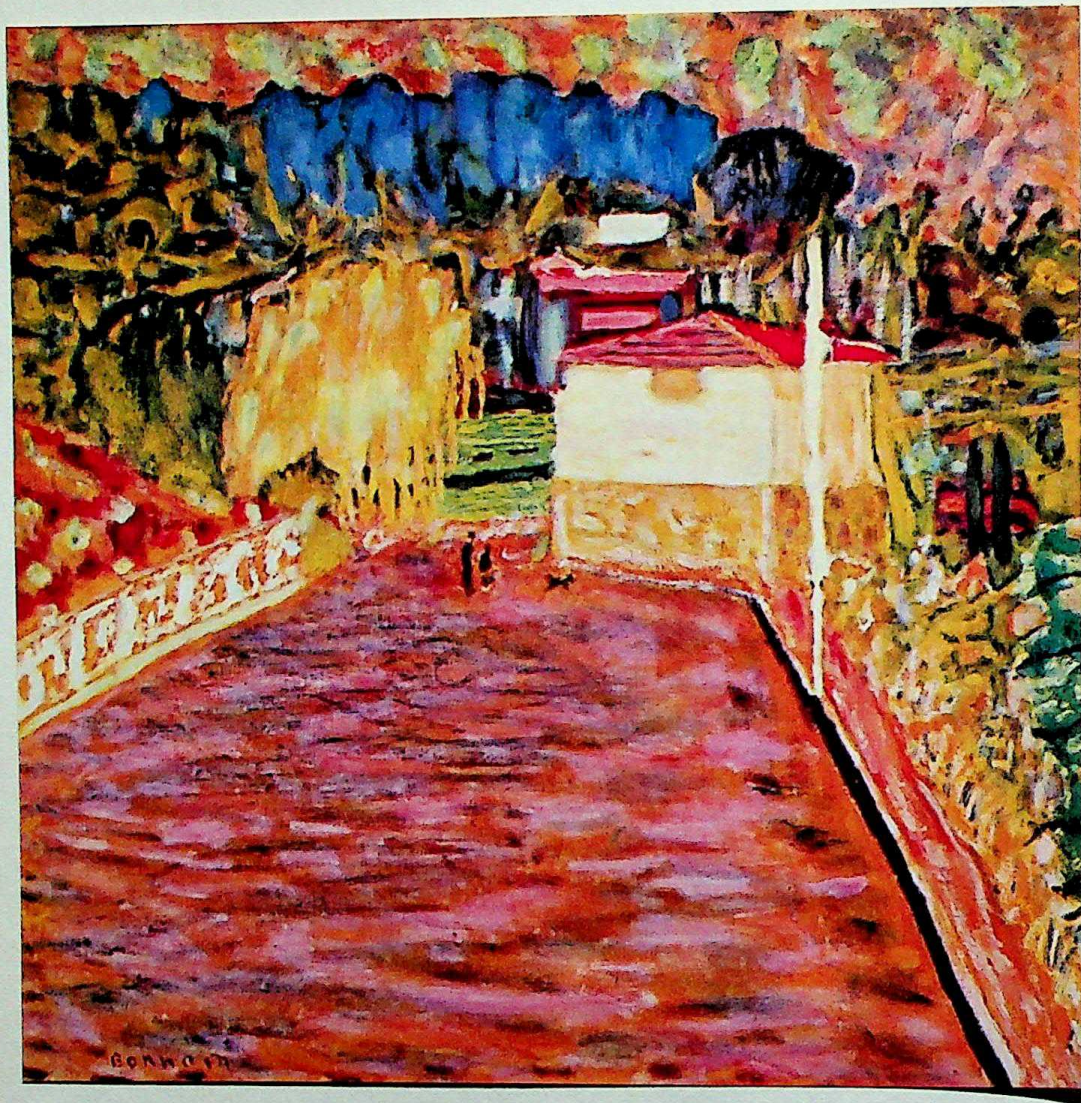
PIERRE BONNARD - NUDE IN THE BATH - (0,93; 1,47) MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS





PIERRE BONNARD - WHITE INTERIOR. 1933 - (1,09; 1,62) GRENOBLE MUSEUM

Such perhaps is the importance of Nabi art in all its implications. Not only through their contribution to decorative art and to the poster in particular did they render a paramount service to the creation of a period style. Not only did they revolutionise the print, the book, newspaper-drawing and theatre décor, but what is more, and from the point of view which is our particular concern, they played a decisive part in the development of painting. Far from being late Impressionists, — a mediocre rôle which has sometimes been thrust upon them — they opened the way to all the painters who came after them. In their theories as bold as they are clear, they thought out painting anew, using a method entirely foreign to the often confused feelings of a Cézanne, a Gauguin or a Van Gogh. We know that from this point of view Sérusier could claim, quite legitimately moreover, a kind of spiritual paternity in his relation to Cubism. But the important thing to remember is that there have been hardly any pictorial discoveries since them, of which the germ is not already in their work. Look for example at Vuillard's canvas *In Bed* (1891) in the Musée d'Art Moderne. As well as being the wittiest expression of the tender and smiling genius of its author "a plane surface covered with colours assembled



PIERRE BONNARD - THE PINK ROAD. 1934 - (0,59; 0,61) MUSÉE DE L'ANNONCIADE, SAINT-TROPEZ

in a certain order" to which the Nabis insisted on reducing painting, it also affirms the indefensible right of the painter to simplify and distort nature, nay, employ the most arbitrary methods to make himself understood and to communicate his message. Reducing the folds of a falling cloth to a few lines which determine semi-geometric figures: enclosing colour within the minor harmonies of a lullaby — Vuillard is not satisfied with these for conveying the impression of calm which he has felt and wants us to share. Rhythm is indispensable — a semi-circular rhythm or, to be more exact, that of a garland, the languid softness of which he emphasizes by contrasting it with a T-shaped cross, the droopiness of the garland in the centre part corresponding to that of the body in sleep, and by giving us its "equivalent" at the same time as its emotion. Obtaining the strong *tempi* of his rhythms by the pile of the pillows which he imagines on the right, he requires another strong *tempo* on the left — which

he creates by giving the woman the strange posture of sleeping with her knees in the air; and as it is necessary for him that this second — emphatic — tempo should balance on the left that of the pillows on the right, he has not hesitated to exaggerate the length of the woman's body at the expense of the anatomy. It is a tacit admission that he puts pictorial requirements before truth to nature. And now we come to a second admission of this order of preference. What is the strip of light colour in the top part of the picture? Is it a frieze of wall-paper crowning the rest of the wall-paper? Is it the hanging arch of a bed-tester? It is neither. It is merely a strip put there to balance the strip that runs along the base of the composition — a rhyme, a counter-point, a purely plastic element indispensable to the harmony of the work.

And this is not the only time that Vuillard foreshadows abstract painting. Consider the number of canvases in which he has boldly outlined doors or windows in the background for the sole purpose of endowing his work with a pure geometrical structure such as Mondrian with still more uncompromising severity strove after in the play of verticals and horizontals that, in his case, had no representational pretext. The most puritan precursor of abstract art, Vuillard, also anticipates the most lyrical abstract art when he stars women's dresses with flowers, transforms the papers on the walls of his interiors into an assembly of small, vibrating points, a harmony of coloured touches, giving us a foretaste of the manner which, if not realist, is at least figurative, of the youthful and clamorous Tachism.

You could multiply the examples, show in his *View of Lake Geneva, Souvenir de Romanel* (1900) for example an attempt, before Matisse, to suggest space by the placing of strips of contrasting colours one above the other, in the same way as it would be easy to show Vallotton as both an unconscious surrealist, a precursor, but how much more authentic, of Dali, and also an ancestor of "Neue Sächlichkeit". These few summary hints will suffice to establish the importance of a movement that is still misunderstood but has had without doubt a decisive influence on the destinies of modern art.

The fact that subsequently Ranson's, Verkade's, Ballin's inspiration, for various reasons dried up, that Sérusier got too caught up in the archaism and symbolism of Breton folklore, though it is a subject by no means lacking in dignity and poetry; that Maurice Denis, won over by Fra Angelico's then Raphael's Italy, abandoned "symbolism and Gauguin for a new classical order" as he himself puts it, that Vallotton also went back to traditional painting and even Vuillard, whom, after 1900, the middle-class is to appoint as its last portraitist, all this hardly matters, and still less in so far as Bonnard's work, constituting as it does the crowning and supreme success of the movement, alone is enough to justify the experiments of the Nabis.

Such a statement may seem absurd. Does not the whole development of the master seem to have led him far away from the formulas of his youth into the wake, one might think, if not of Monet, at least of Renoir? Abandoning the precise graphism and clear outlines of his early years, about 1898, perhaps under the influence of Carrière, highly thought of at this time, he becomes enamoured of blurred forms which he situates in a hazy atmosphere, sometimes a combination of pearl-greys and rainbow colours. If we look no further than the *Musée d'Art Moderne* the *Women and Children* of 1899, *Woman resting on a Bed*, *Man and Woman*, the two last-mentioned masterpieces reveal Bonnard's new curiosity for conveying both

atmosphere and action in the form. It is not surprising that, abandoning indoor interiors for the street and the country, he should have made the discovery of the open air, so cherished by the Impressionists and the discovery of colour for rendering it. His palette which had been limited since 1893 to blacks and greys then becomes lighter — we are dealing now with the 1905 period — and pinks, greens, turquoise blues, tea-yellows begin to appear in his canvases in which the light-reflections are indicated with the most accurate subtlety, all the tones produce an interplay of wonderful variegation and the transitions are effected with wit as well as taste. Later his palette was to be heightened in tone, and become more varied and enriched but colour was to continue to be Bonnard's great passion, a colour which gives the appearance of being Impressionist because he paints in little, vibrating touches which remind one of Monet's "commas". This explains why we find an affinity between Bonnard and the Impressionists which their predilection for similar subjects confirms—nudes in their bathrooms, as with Degas, or in the sunshine, as with Renoir; fruits as juicy, flowers as lush as those of the master of Les Ponchettes; landscapes painted preferably at Vernon, near Giverny, or at Le Cannet, near Cagnes, in which the waters of river or sea and vast skies occupy the principal place.

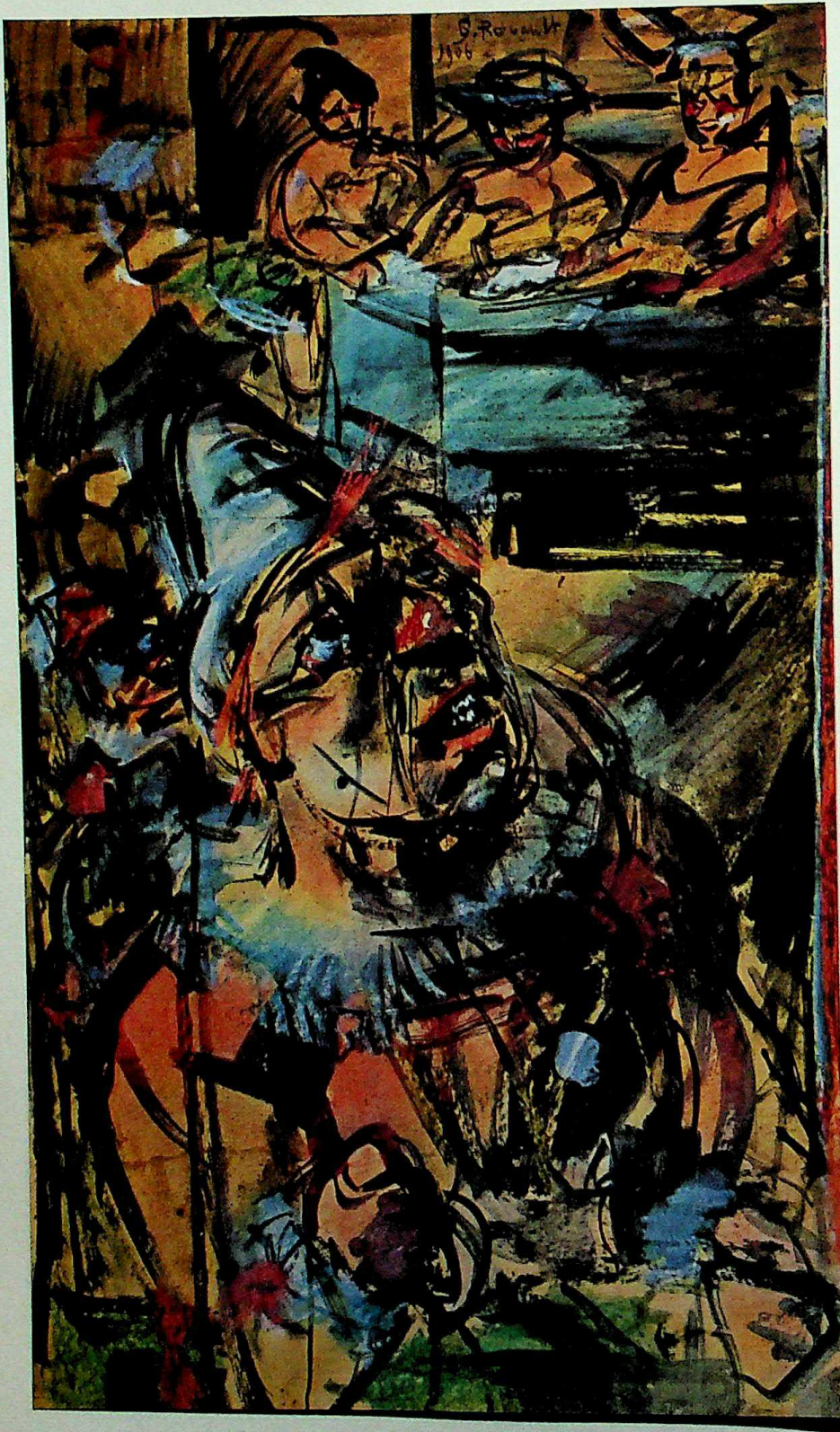
Nothing however could be more superficial than these relationships. In reality, a world of differences separates Bonnard from Monet — first the fact that the picture is never for one "the window open on to Nature, the strip of landscape" that it was for the other, but a strongly constructed organism — even when this was not immediately apparent — frequently designed in accordance with the laws of decorative art. To confine ourselves solely to examples in the Musée d'Art Moderne, the "plastic echoes" that Bonnard sets up in his decorative panel the *Fishing Boat* (1906) between the prow of the boat, the drooping branch, the woman's hat and the gesture of the child in the boat; in the *Tug-boat* (1930) the encroachment of the surface of the canvas of bushes, foliage, flowers which cover up the emptiness of the sky; the plunging angle at which we view *Coin de Table* (1935) which permits the painter to set the table in the picture plane; the raising of the horizon in the *Sailing out of Trouville harbour* (1938-1943) and the relationships established between its horizontality and those of the house-tops and the quays; all these points among many others are so many proofs of the trouble — always a determining factor with any artist — he takes to construct his composition, not to leave any gaps, to avoid holes which would involve the use of perspective which as a good Nabi, he is careful to eschew. We see him therefore condemned not only to short-circuit, as it were, the planes, but also to introduce only the slightest hint of modelling, that is, in the round and by gliding over the hinges which articulate the forms. Figures, fruit, trees, in everything he paints, the elements of construction are so closely fitted together that the picture gains a constituent unity which does not derive only from the artist's decorative intentions but also from his conception of the picture as a plastic entity, a pure plastic being, called into an independent life of its own.

Why then should we be surprised that painting, at this stage, does not possess in Bonnard's eyes the realist function that Claude Monet had never ceased assigning to it? The painter of Vernon did not aim at copying the reality which the painter of Giverny had always striven to render even in its most elusive manifestations. If we compare the *Banks of the Seine* painted by the former about 1922 (Musée National d'Art Moderne) with the view of the Seine painted by the latter in the same neighbourhood of the confluence of the Seine and the Epte, we shall have no difficulty in

noticing the absence of realism in Bonnard's. When did this river ever show violet waters imprisoned between emerald reeds? And is this electric-blue, deep, unchanging sky that of some tropical region or Normandy? Neither. It is the fruit of Bonnard's sensibility and imagination. Loading his blue on the turquoise of the motionless water of the river, he has enhanced the impression of heat and light which this Normandy summer gave him and composed a kind of symphony which one might not unaptly call "Thermidor". He is not concerned to render the real light of Vernon, or set the quivering trees of that region in their own atmosphere and envelop the waters of the Seine in their customary mist. One detail, but it is an eloquent one. Never would Monet, Sisley and Pissarro have dared to suppress the shadow of the forms which Bonnard, whether he suppresses it to avoid introducing any modelling or in order to attain a higher intensity of colour, rarely admits in his pictures. His subjectivism is a contrast to the objectivity of the Impressionists. He does not paint landscapes but the visions that the spectacle of nature inspires in a heart intoxicated with the beauty and vitality of the world.

The fact is that Bonnard is a visionary, perhaps the most imaginative visionary in contemporary painting. What unaffected fantasy, what tact, what "art that conceals art" was needed on the part of Bonnard to prevent that power of invention which bursts out in Picasso's creation of form, striking immediately whoever looks at his colour! Yet no other painter's palette is more, I won't say arbitrary, still less gratuitous, but unnaturalistic than his. Where will you find in nature those snowy, silvery, iridescent ivory whites of which he is so fond? Those vermilions as light as roses, those golden greens, those amber yellows, those lemon yellows, lilacs, mauves, electric blues which make sapphires dull in comparison? And above all, those relationships which he ventures with cool audacity to establish between them, at the risk of foundering a hundred times over in a cacophony that he always contrives to avoid. This, in defiance of the most traditional rules which he alone seemed able to negotiate so superbly! Thus he delights in setting his foregrounds in light colours and the others in more and more sustained harmonies, passing (in his *Décor Méridional* of the Musée d'Art Moderne, for example) from the grey and pale pinks to metallic oranges, violets, emerald greens of fierce intensity. If "jeering at philosophy is really to philosophize...", why should not the real painter jeer likewise at painting, its recipes, its conventions?

In accordance with this "key" that he had created, Bonnard's universe seems less a replica than a dream of our universe. Motionless women, bewildered, lost in their ecstasy, on whom the drama of light seems to weigh (Portraits of *Reine Natanson* and *Marthe Bonnard* 1928), nudes whose monstrously elongated limbs (for whoever dares to look) correspond to the artist's wish to render the slow and voluptuous movement of the eyes (and hands) over the form; interiors in which the walls that seem to be made of living ice allow you to see landscapes which appear like gems; animals, like the *White Horse* and *Ox* (1946), possibly his masterpieces, spectral, like Redon's still-lives in which, in a peach, a bunch of grapes, a flower, the whole creative power of nature and life seems transcendent; all these dreams of a distorted, transposed, recreated world, often even completely invented—but one in which the profound reality of things is apprehended beyond their appearance—are forms of expression customary in Bonnard. And in this, as opposed to the truth-to-life-and-impression technique of the Impressionists, he ranges himself in the tradition of Nabi art which was founded on the necessity for double distortion, the correspondence between



GEORGES ROUAULT - CLOWN
IN THE BOX. 1906 - (0,78;
0,46) PRIVATE COLLECTION,
PARIS

external forms and subjective states, the "equivalents" of emotions and dreams, the substitution of his "sanctification" — i.e. his re-creation on the spiritual plane — for imitation of nature.

Untrue though Bonnard was to the letter of the Nabi law with regard to painting, he is perhaps the only artist of the group who remained faithful to its spirit, the only one who followed out to their logical extreme all the premisses posed by the artist friends of his twenties.

THE FIRST EXPRESSIONIST WAVE

IN the beginning was Toulouse-Lautrec. Wrongly associated with the Impressionists and Degas — to whose generation he did not belong — on account of his premature death and his "modern" subjects, the painter of *La Goulue* at the Moulin Rouge¹ could have more justifiably claimed affinity with his contemporaries, the Nabis who shared his indifference for the open-air, his interest in artificial lighting, his fondness for the synthetic line, the clear definition and the arabesque, the flat tint and space in Japanese style, in a word, all his concern for the decorative element in painting. But one factor sets him apart, his passion for character, the individual face, body or spectacle and the semi-caricaturist way in which he exaggerates or rather distorts it by his method of breaking up the design. This characteristic which certainly links him up with Van Gogh reveals him as an ancestor of Expressionism, the first manifestation of which springs from him more than from anyone else, that is as far as some of their preoccupations and resources are concerned, if not in the fundamentally human attitude of its champions.

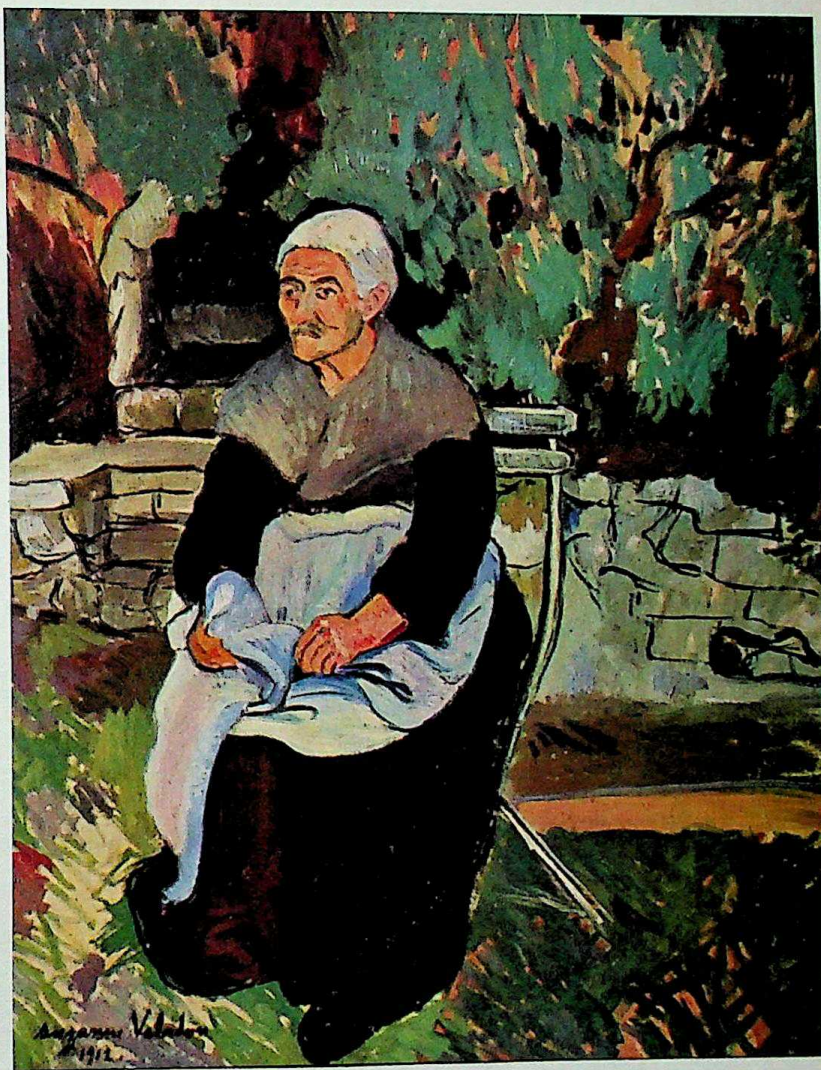
It is however a far cry from this complex and often paradoxical collection of psychological and even metaphysical data and pictorial exploration to the art of the painter of the *Table au Moulin Rouge*. Painting things, not as they appear but on the one hand as one has experienced them, as they have affected our inmost being, and, on the other, as they are in their true nature which we can only penetrate by participating in the first-mentioned process, this is the contradictory yet inseparable twofold operation at the basis of the Expressionist attitude with consequences that are not easy to demonstrate. First we have the varying indifference of each painter to plastic problems posed by the renewal of contemporary art together with the elaboration of a "pure" painting. Secondly the brutal attitude he brings to his interpretation of nature which is merely his pretext and spring-board. Lastly the almost exclusive fixation of his interest on certain objects with which he identifies himself and in which he steeps himself and for the sake of which he almost divests himself of his personality only to re-discover it in his re-discovery of the objects themselves. In this way the picture becomes the passionate and dynamic caricature of a human experience, the more compelling in that, not infrequently, it is a distressing

one. That is to say that the art of the expressionist painter is dominated by a humanity and nature — shall we say, more generally, a wretched and pitiable universe — which on some occasions it judges and condemns and with which, on others, it is in harmony. But what emerges is that behind each picture is always the wish, nay, the imperious and deep-seated necessity to do justice to the violence of the particular human experience even though it means a coarsening of the character and an exaggeration of the effects. The old aesthetic principles of the Romantic School, attempts to shock and startle the spectator, thus become the order of the day. But because these principles suffered from their previous association they needed to be restated before their virtues could be re-discovered by new, effective and hitherto unexplored means that modern painting had only recently invented. Fi then on eloquence! Conciseness would be more effective. Suggestion and synthesis were to replace analytical abundance. The breaks and interruptions which, isolating each element in the painting, increase their effectiveness, were to be preferred to rhetorical transitions. The aim was the same, the means employed were no less original than those for which Toulouse-Lautrec prepared the way because he lived part of the Expressionist experience in advance, and, in his human dilemma, had felt the need to liberate the character, exalt ugliness and shock the public. This accounts for the fact that the greatest champions of the original Expressionist movement, Rouault, Picasso, Suzanne Valadon, rallied under his banner.

These artists had in fact no other common denominator. What else could it be? Madly individualistic by his very nature, the Expressionist painter could belong to no school; he could not pour a unique experience, the very strangeness of which required of him that he should create his own art, into the mould of collective formulas. It is not therefore possible to study this first growth of Expressionism which electrified French art about the turn of the century in the way we have already considered the Nabis or shall consider the Fauves. The former and latter may be thought of — if I may use the comparison — as constellations with well-defined outlines, whereas this first wave of Expressionism reminds us of a confused nebula from which some important and independent stars detach themselves, in whom the Expressionist *Angst* which dominated French painting round the year 1900 appears to be summarized.

Was it weariness of academic and Impressionist objectivism? Was it weariness of the decorative ambitions dear to the Nabis, their good taste, their middle-class refinement? Was it the restrained boldness if not of their nature at any rate of their expression? Was it the feeling of tragic, social and individual realities which were concealed beneath the brilliant exterior of the "Belle Époque" and which, so far, had only come to the surface as far as art was concerned and then in the minor manifestation of journalistic drawing even when those who practised it — two important precursors of Expressionism — had the names Steinlen and Forain? The fact is that the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed — alongside the Fauve movement which we shall be discussing later and perhaps a little before it²⁷ — the development of a kind of painting for which the only apt label is Expressionist.

One of the oldest expressions of this first phase is, in my opinion, the art of Suzanne Valadon. Born in the poorest section of society, educated in the rough school of poverty and in turn during her adolescence, maid-of-all-work, nursemaid,



SUZANNE VALADON — PORTRAIT OF
HER MOTHER. 1912 — (0,80; 0,64)
PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

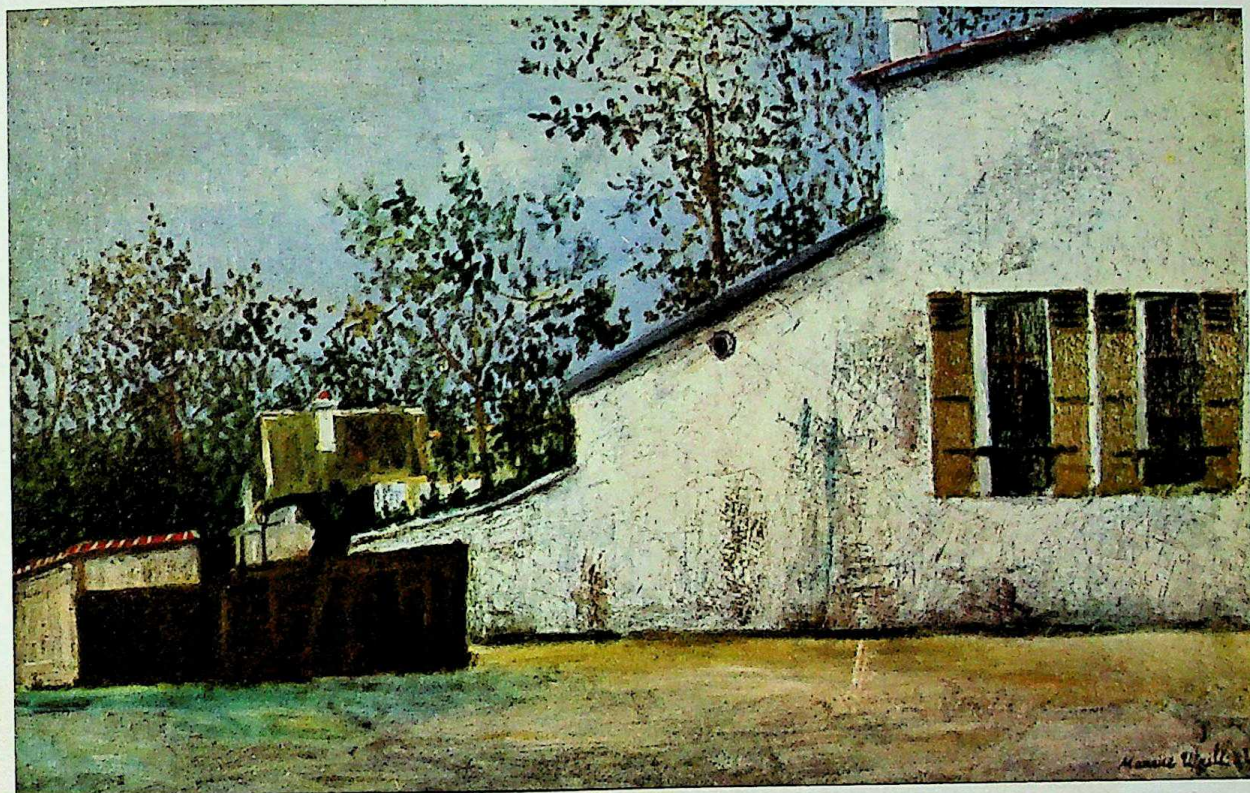
waitress, greengrocer's assistant, acrobat and, after a fall from a trapeze, an artists' model, she expresses in her first works (1883-1889, roughly speaking) which are essentially drawings, the fleshless nakedness of undernourished little girls, the ravaged faces of old women whose lives had been as hard as her mother's, Maman Madeleine's. She refused to be moved, despite her secret affection, by children's faces — even by that of her own son — and expressed herself in a forceful line that has nothing feminine about it beyond its shuddering violence and perhaps that spontaneity which won Degas' admiration. And did not that broad synthesis, expressive of the form and character which Degas arrived at by analysis, work and effort of will, appear to spring to life spontaneously under the swift fingers of the person he called his "terrible Maria"? At first sight closer to the graphism of the older master than to Toulouse-Lautrec's in its sustained severity, its pure and simple hardness, Suzanne Valadon's line

is in fact much closer to the latter's; an instinctive simplification, expressive conciseness, the power to delineate not only the outward appearance but the soul in which Degas showed such little interest, her eloquent and intuitive gift of human understanding, are all characteristics which link her graphic art with that of the artist who was her neighbour in the rue Tourlaque, and for whom she had posed on several occasions.

Fresh to painting in 1893 (*Portrait of Erik Satie*) but especially from the year 1905, Suzanne Valadon was able to extend her range of subjects at the same time as her technique, and paint fine landscapes (*Village of Saint-Bernard*, 1929), admirable still-lives (*The Violon*, 1921). Yet her favourite territory still remains that of the Expressionists — the human being. Her approach is particularly through the nude figure and the face, and she brought an equal curiosity to the practice of both *genres*. "I paint people in order to learn to know them", she said²⁸. Everything is portraiture as far as she is concerned, and a breast, thigh, wrinkle are interrogated with no less attention than a facial expression. The models, often chosen for their ugliness, their commonplace nature, — heavy breasts, sagging stomachs, wide hips, prominent buttocks, thick wrists and ankles — are depicted with a gift for characterization

MAURICE UTRILLO — THE BASILICA OF ST. DENIS — PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS





MAURICE UTRILLO - BERLIOZ' HOUSE - (0,46; 0,73) MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS

which we find in both individual and collective portraits that show the same taste for whatever is expressive, the same zeal for brushing in a picture that wrests from the subjects its inmost secrets. Portraits too and, genre paintings populated with average people are chosen because of their strong flavour, and show the same preoccupation with character and effect. (*The Dressmaker*, 1914; *The Abandoned Doll*, 1921).

But we should be neglecting one entire aspect of Suzanne Valadon's genius if we passed over her important plastic discoveries. Inherited from Degas, strengthened through her contact with the works of Cézanne, her emphasis on construction is allied to a love of colour that is both decorative and expressive and is doubtless part of her legacy from Gauguin. Her tones which are heavy and sumptuous and very close to each other have their opulence enormously increased by the beautiful paint quality of impeccable transparency. Although her art is Expressionist, it is none the less haunted, on occasions, by a care for pure beauty (hence the distortion of certain contours in her paintings "so that they shall form arabesques") and by her preoccupation with setting (*Net Casters*, 1914) which fits in with her taste for tight composition. Like Toulouse-Lautrec, her contemporary, she seems less of a devotee

of Expressionism than a sympathizer with an aesthetic system that is also an ethical system and a person who shares only a limited number of the movement's aims.

The same can be said of her son, Utrillo. If ever art proves the arbitrary nature of classifications to which art-historians are nevertheless constrained, it is in the case of this painter who is exceptional from every point of view. He has often been listed — I am guilty myself — among the twentieth century "Primitives" but his consummate professional skill is far beyond that of a Vivin or a Bombois. And if we placed him, as we might, among the Neo-Realists, by the side of Segonzac, should we not perhaps be missing the essential nature of his contribution and sacrificing what is a profound element in his work, poetry, to the merely external one of representation? Thus, we are possibly right not to separate the son from the mother to whom he owes so much, and justified in including a consideration of Utrillo's painting in an account of this first phase of Expressionism which was established between 1900 and 1910 at a time when his most successful works were being painted.

No doubt he was an Expressionist without either knowing that he was or wanting to be one (but, after all, was he not a *painter* in spite of himself and without knowing it?). All the same he must be included in this movement because of certain characteristics of his painting or at any rate of the work he produced during his creative years (1906-1908), his so-called Montmagny periods (1903-1905), Impressionist (1906-1908) and "White" period (1908-1914). Portraits, figures — the Expressionists' favourite terrain — are alien to a brush exclusively concerned with landscape. But these landscapes are based on the same poetry of poverty, and, to the almost complete exclusion of the country, find their poetry only in town suburbs and in a mediocrity which is worse than poverty. They are in fact not so much landscapes as evocations of the lives of a class charged with humanity and poetry, and express in turn the decay of the suburbs (*Bulle Pinson, Jardin de Montmagny*), the Paris quays, the picturesque element of Montmartre which was to become increasingly Utrillo's favourite subject. These pictures, of an abundance which testifies to the astonishing rapidity of their execution, have a spontaneity which would justify us in considering them as Expressionist creations even if other characteristics did not make more pressing claims. First and foremost among them, the effort on the part of the painter to equal the objective reality of things in his completely personal interpretations. Loaded with this double purpose which animates all Expressionism, subjective to the point of being visionary in some extreme cases (*Rheims Cathedral in Flames*, 1914), Utrillo's paintings, especially during his "white" period, show the painter's insistence on conferring the reality of his subject on the picture. "My walls are never white enough", he writes²⁹. Thus, not content with piling up layers of intense white, he went so far as to mix the actual plaster used on such walls into his painting, and this is paralleled by his conscientious copying of the lettering on signs, hoardings, posters and wall-inscriptions. The pursuit of objective truth? Doubtless, but also a pursuit of character. This Utrillo is certainly his mother's son, who, on showing her a canvas and saying, "Is it ugly?", received the reply "It can never be ugly enough!" What she had looked for in tired flesh, facial ravages, he looks for in his portraits, in houses that are poor in appearance but rich in expression, their sordid and commonplace character ennobled by poetry.

Like his mother, he adds a concern with the pictorial and above all the structural element to his interest in expression. He excels at modelling solid forms by means of bold, synthetic planes, adding what is probably a spontaneous synthesis to a doubtlessly instinctive analysis. But — and this is where he obtains a kind of miraculous result which so many painters have striven in vain to produce — he is immediately successful in placing these masses in a luminous atmosphere. Whether he paints in the subdued tones of the Montmagny period or the beginning of the "White" period, whether he prefers the clear harmonies of his Impressionist manner or of the end of that period, the lightest possible sky always floats above these buildings which are enveloped in the freshest of atmospheres. Whether it is impasto or thin, chalky or pearly, the paint radiates a light which is so perfect that the name of Corot springs to the lips of anyone who looks at such pictures by Utrillo as *Rue du Mont-Cenis*, *Villiers-le-Bel Church*, *View of Fère-en-Tardenois*. We are now a long way from Expressionism.

But the rapid exhaustion of his creative genius brings us back to it. Signs of sclerosis are already noticeable in the works of 1913 and can be read more and more clearly in those which, often hard in drawing, strident in colour, poor in paint quality, follow each other between 1914 and 1925. From this date on, Utrillo, reduced to mannerisms, was merely to repeat his least significant work. One's mind turns to the case of Ensor who died as far as painting was concerned fifty years before his actual death, of Münch, Kokoschka, Permeke, all those painters possessed of spontaneous genius, for whom painting seems to be a kind of exorcism which succeeds only too well; as if, once delivered from their familiar demons by a spate of frenzied creation, these champions of Expressionism were denied all renewal, development and even maturity — the privileges of the conscious, meditative type of artist — because of their very nature.

The exception which proves the rule appears to be Rouault whose work did not cease to evolve for fifty or sixty years and was none the less from 1902 — possibly 1897 — to about 1913 the most characteristic expression in France of this first wave of Expressionism.

It is Expressionist first and foremost in its subjects, among which, as in the case of Toulouse-Lautrec, figures are very much more common than still-lives — the latter are almost absent from his production at that time — and his landscapes which are inhabited by human beings and gain their meaning from this fact — for example the *Work-yard* (1897) belonging to the Mme Henri Simon Collection. Rouault's interest is focussed almost exclusively on humanity. It was apropos this subject that the painter outlined to us his conception of life which can be summarized in the celebrated saying of Pascal, "Woe to Man without God..." It is indeed a fallen and wretched man who springs to life under his brush, a man who is a prey to his own vices, the ruthlessness of society, the rigour of fate. And from the year 1902 Rouault inveighed against luxury in pictures of prostitutes so final and definite that they were copied, but never equalled, by his friend Léon Bonhomme from 1906 on and eclipsed the types of prostitute which the demi-monde of Paris and London inspired his friend Desvallières to paint in 1903 and after.

If the stigmata of debauchery ravage the flesh of these women, those of vanity can be read on the stupid faces of pedagogues — another favourite theme of Rouault

who attacks egoism, complacency, pride, cruelty, the hypocrisy of the wealthy even more violently and shows them full of themselves, obscene, repulsive, horrible (*Les Poulot*, 1905, *The Couple*, 1905, *The Bride*, 1908, *Mr. X...* 1911 *The Beautiful Mme X...* 1915). Why would we evince any surprise after that, that society in which the proud dominate should be ruthless towards the humble, these poor wretches for whom Rouault reserves all his tenderness? Whether he is painting the labourer exhausted by his work (*Workman's Head*, 1911), the workman's wife worn out by child-birth or — with a shattering prescience — “displaced persons” fleeing in a hostile winter (*Exodus*, 1911), this passionate Christian and close friend of Léon Bloy draws up an indictment against society as implacable as the case he brings against human justice when he shows us grotesque barristers and gendarmes as depraved as the prisoner they stand over, judges above all, fierce, merciless, inhuman, monstrous ministers of an abominable cult (the *Black Barrister*, the *Prisoner*, the *Three Judges*, 1913).

Man, victim of himself and others, is ultimately the victim of his own fate. That is to say he is like the clown whose vocation it is to be buffeted and who represents for Rouault the symbol of the human being. “I saw clearly,” he wrote, “that the clown was myself, us... But if we are surprised as I have surprised the old clown, oh! then who can dare to confess that his bowels are not gripped by an immeasurable pity? My fault is never to leave anyone his spangled coat. Were he king or emperor, it is his soul that I must see”. Hence this succession of tragic clowns whose look, charged with sorrow and love, is that of mankind which, even as it suffers and entreats, never ceases to hope and love. New pictures, owing nothing to the other circus-painters, Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat, Renoir, Degas and very little even to Daumier, these heads with their dramatic intensity, anticipate the *Christs* that Rouault was to paint during and after 1906. It is a theme which lends his other themes their full significance.

Expressionist in his vision of the world and his conception of painting as a “burning confession”, Rouault is also Expressionist in the exaggeration of his expression. A man of the people, he is always driven by an inescapable urge to generalize. In the individual he sees the species, the type, even the trade, and makes generic images—nay myths—of all the figures he paints. And he always amplifies the theme. He has Rabelais’ truculent laugh; his insensate fury is that of the Hebrew prophets. And he never ceases to mix the grotesque with the sublime, confuse the message with the poem, buffoonery with epic, and still further consecrates everything he treats either by projecting his fundamentally religious nature into it or penetrating the deep nature of things beyond the outer appearance to their divine essence.

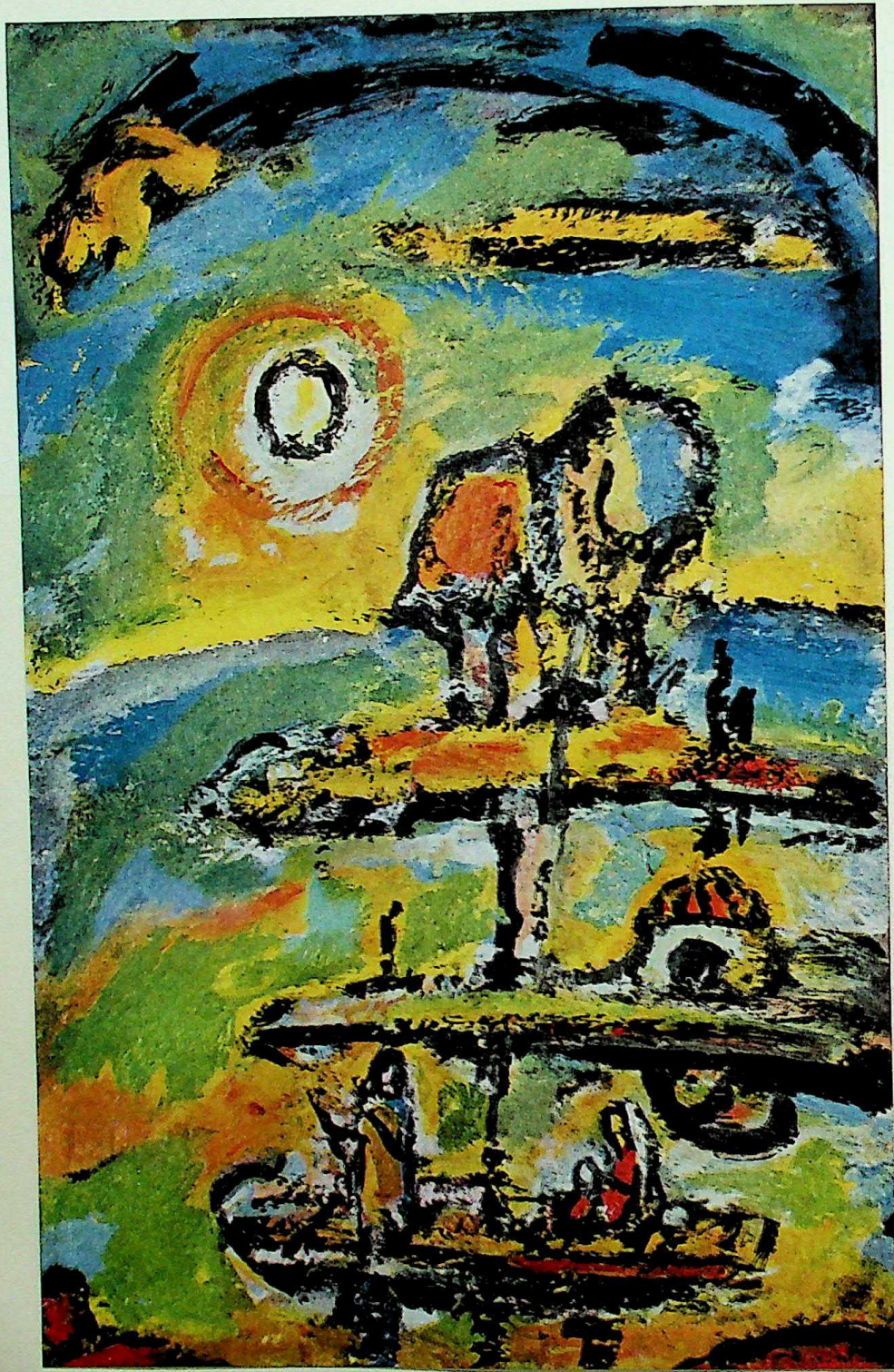
But this sublime, mystic Punch and Judy show is also animated by other pre-occupations. Although his works are fruits of visual emotion, they never fail to be plastic and pictorial too. Yet, as opposed to what takes place in so many Expressionists who are incapable of bringing the true artist to bear on their experiences, his work is entirely free of any literary element. His art is delicately poised between the message and its expression. A simplified, spontaneous, synthetic drawing of such breadth that it is incapable of anything but large forms; a varied colour, but he overlays his diverse pinks, greens, yellows and blacks with a unifying blue and chiaroscuro; a noble structure, the more impressive in that the figures meet us directly at the edge of the support without a foreground and never have their effectiveness attenuated by an action, accessories or background; the execution is rapid, vibrant, completely spontaneous, for which he uses the best medium, water-colour, frequently supplemented



GEORGES ROUAULT — THE JUDGES. 1913 — (0,76; 1,056) MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (SAM. A. LEWISOHN BEQUEST), NEW YORK

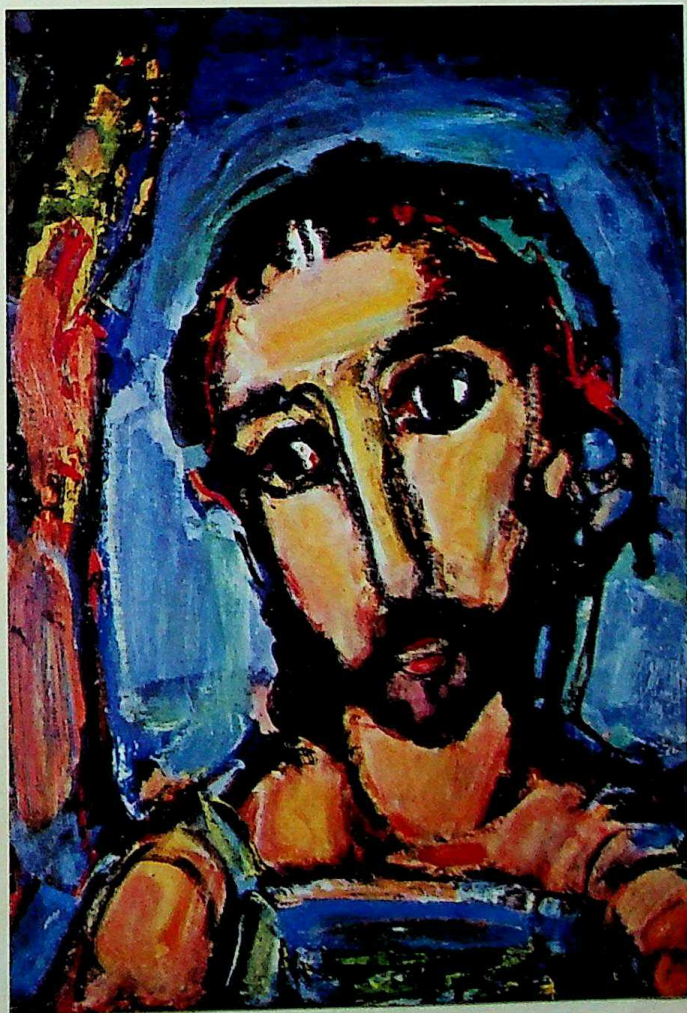
with gouache; it is by all this great professional skill in which economy rivals firmness that Rouault imposes his visions upon us. They are visions of a seer who discovers the fantastic and sacred beyond the natural world and fearlessly stamps that spectacle on our minds.

Rouault's art, which between 1897 and 1912 was a product of a delicate balance between the plastic and expressive element, was subsequently to see the latter make increasing encroachments on the former without however ever completely swamping it. Man in the landscape was to give way more and more to God and even — after 1939 — to flowers. A more intense feeling was to emerge between 1912 and 1930 (*The Old Clown*, *The Apprentice*), which became calmer from 1930 to 1939 (*Christ mocked by Soldiers*, 1932, *The Wounded Clown*, 1933, *Passion*, 1937), quiet and serene in the decade following (*Pierrot aristocrate*, *Saint Martha*, *De Profundis*), then to burst forth again in great joyfulness. Technical and professional considerations were becoming increasingly urgent and took the artist towards a more rigid drawing,



GEORGES ROUAULT
NOCTURNE CHRÉTIEN. 1952 - (0,97 ; 0,52) MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE, PARIS

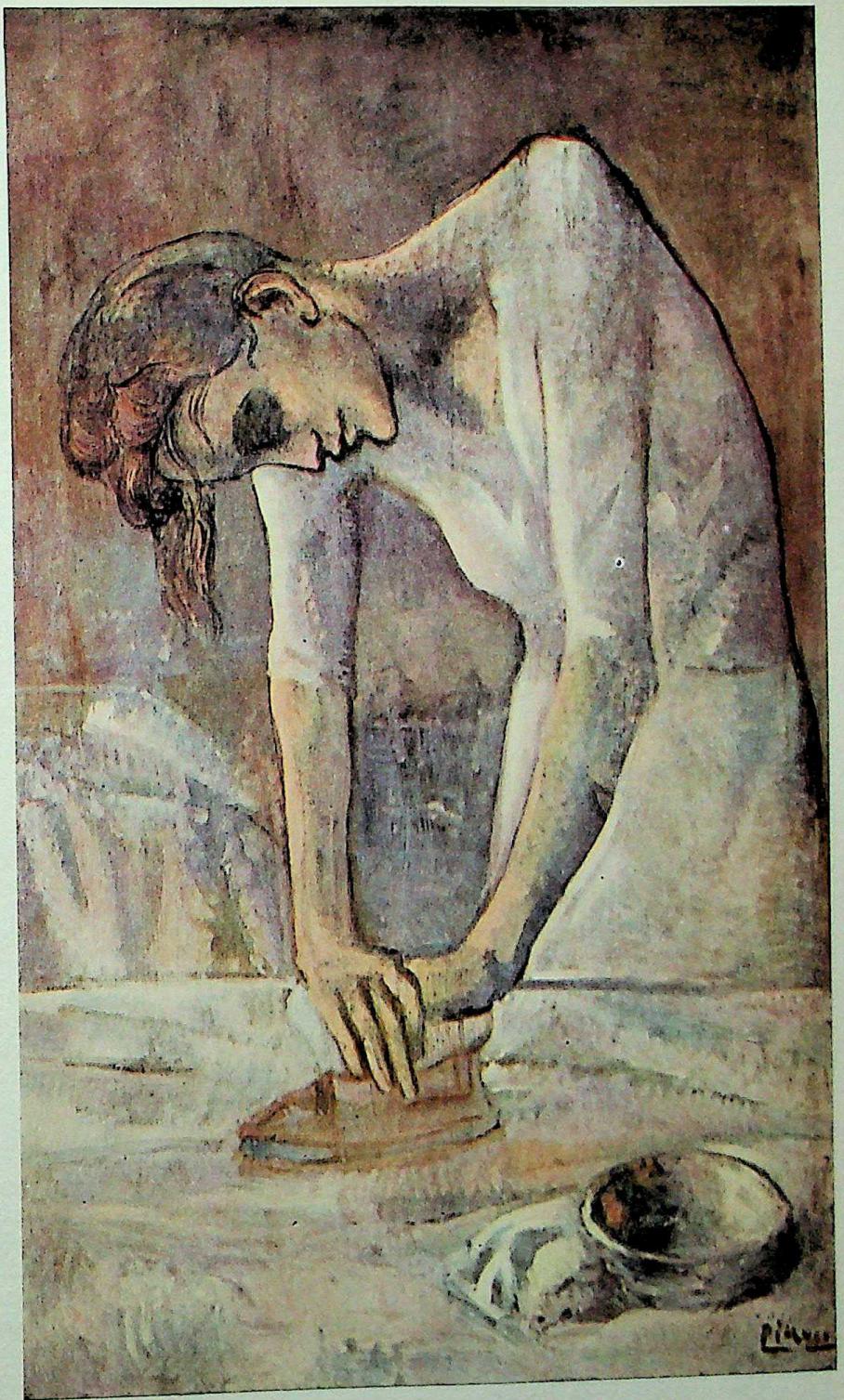
underlined with rough contours, more hieratic form, a more varied colour in which silver-green, and purplish reds and whites occupy an important place alongside the blues; the paint itself — oil paint now — was to become thicker, have more body to it and be more trituated. Then, after 1939, the smaller figures, patterned with hundreds of delicate tones, in continually more sumptuous light, stand out against paint textures still more luxuriant which are built up with a slower and more obsessive passion until the picture possesses a veritable relief and rivals ceramics and enamels in splendour. Preoccupations with harmony and perfection lead the old master to go so far as to decorate the frame to harmonize with each particular work. But this development in the direction of an art that shows a greater care for the problems of pure painting, more concentration, less violence, was never to make Rouault abandon his Expressionist position. He continues to paint what his eyes, the eyes of his



GEORGES ROUAULT — PASSION. 1937 — (1,05; 0,75)
MUSEUM OF ART (HANNA FUND), CLEVELAND

body and those of his soul, have seen and what they have allowed him to discern — the unfathomable hidden treasures, wearing himself out in his efforts to equal their splendour in his transcriptions. His human fervour, his participation in human destiny, and — since 1948 — in the cosmic universe (*Christian Nocturne*, 1952), his synthetic approach which enables him to suggest more than he actually describes and which with this aim returns to the original sources in French mediaeval art, allowing him, incidentally, to be primitive without being a "Primitive" with the ease and naturalness of the son returning to the house of his ancestors — all these are factors which prove that the young Rouault of the *Prostitutes* and *Judges* has survived in the man and the patriarch and that the violence, boldness and invention and genius of the one have never ceased to animate the more complex but invariably more inspired art of the other.

Just as expressionist, but "coldly" so, if I may put it like that, that is by subtraction and in a more deliberate fashion, that is how Picasso's art strikes us in the works that appeared between about 1900 and 1906. All he had to do to paint in this spirit was to remain faithful to the Spanish tradition and the example of his comrade Nonell, a young Catalan who died prematurely, whose works, several of which are preserved in the Barcelona Museum, are a foretaste of Picasso's "blue" period. When he arrived in Paris in 1900 he showed the influence of Gauguin in some of his paintings (*Portrait of Sabartes*, *Harlequin*, 1901) and of Van Gogh (*Blue Roofs*, 1901) but what interested him particularly were drawings done by periodical-illustrators, the works of some Montmartre annalists such as Bottini (*Moulin de la Galette*, 1900, *Les Soupeurs*, 1901), the peremptory pages of Toulouse-Lautrec (*Portrait of Gustave Coquiot*). But his quick intelligence, his unique gift of assimilation, his already staggering virtuosity soon enabled him to fuse all these elements into an original synthesis in the "Blue" period (1903-1905) and the "Pink" period (1905-1906) which followed this Montmartre phase. Except for the different coloration, these two manners would hardly show any difference although the drawing becomes more linear and the form flatter. But the same characteristic subjects of the artist's expressionism are equally present. Neither landscape nor still-lives — Picasso's interest is centred on humanity alone — and, at any rate during his "Pink" period, that superior form of humanity, the world of the theatre, or should we say rather, the "commedia dell'arte". Whether the figures are grouped (*Life*, 1905, *Acrobats with a Dog*, 1905, the *Family of Mountebanks*, 1095, *The Head-dress*, 1095, etc.) or isolated (*The Woman with the Pillow-case*, *The old Guitar-player*, 1903, *Woman ironing*, 1904, *The Little Girl with the Basket of Flowers*, 1905) matters little, so apart, humanly if not plastically, is each individual in the groups, imprisoned in his private jail which cuts him off from contact with other people. Alone or placed side by side with other solitudes, they always belong to the same race, the impoverished, the exploited, the *desperados*. Workers, beggars, mountebanks, all, even the adolescents, are worn out by life, hunger or poverty. Bony, consumptive, filiform, with elongated hands, bent necks, chlorotic flesh, these anaemic phantoms, often burdened with an asexed sexuality, seem to become disembodied in the camaïeu of blurred blues or pink which the painter uses to promote them to a life that is alien to life but is nevertheless more real, more formidable, more ill-starred. With very little modelling — the figures of the "Pink" period have less still than those of the "Blue" — they

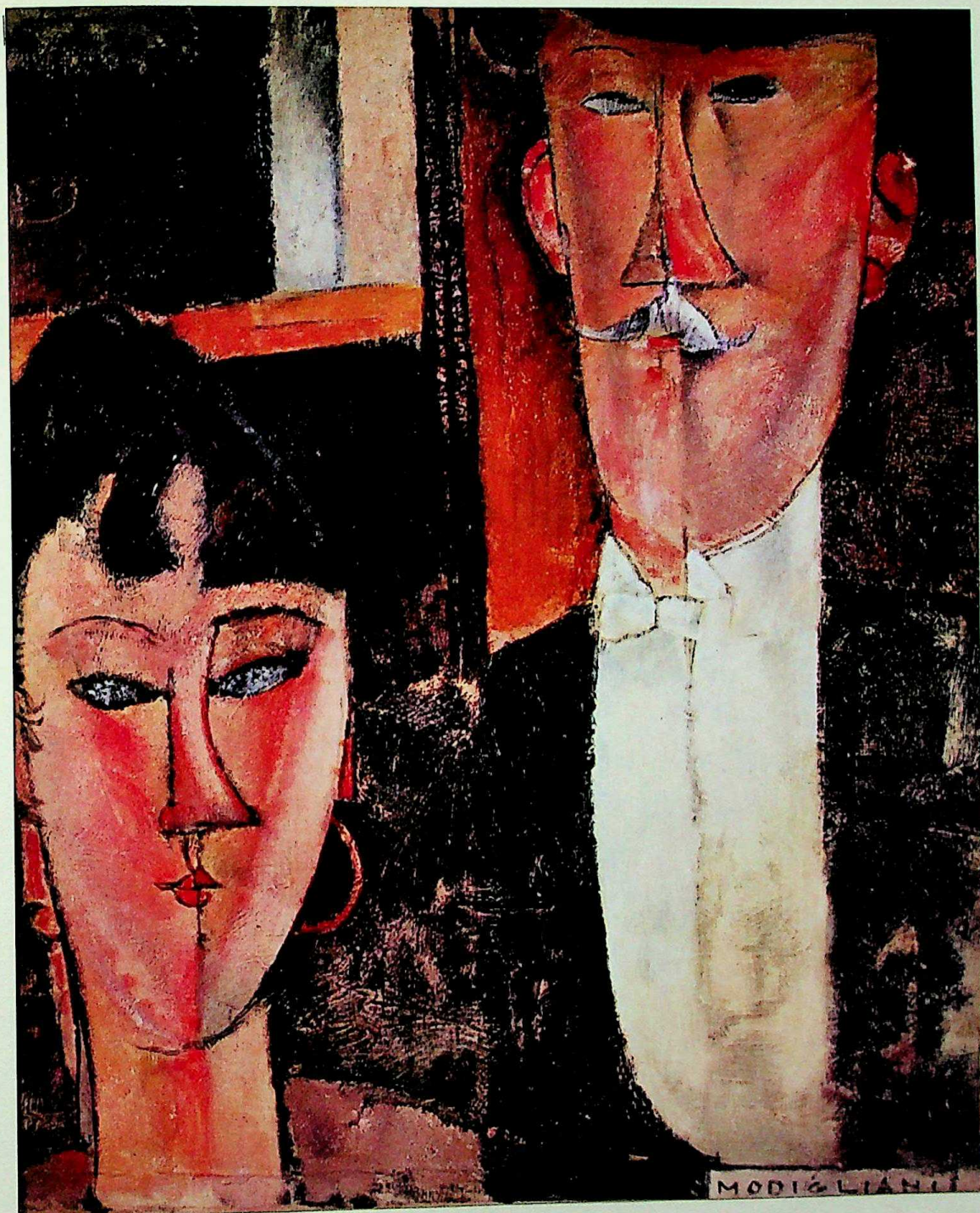


PABLO PICASSO - WOMAN
IRONING. 1904 - (1,17;
0,74) THANNHAUSER
COLLECTION, NEW YORK

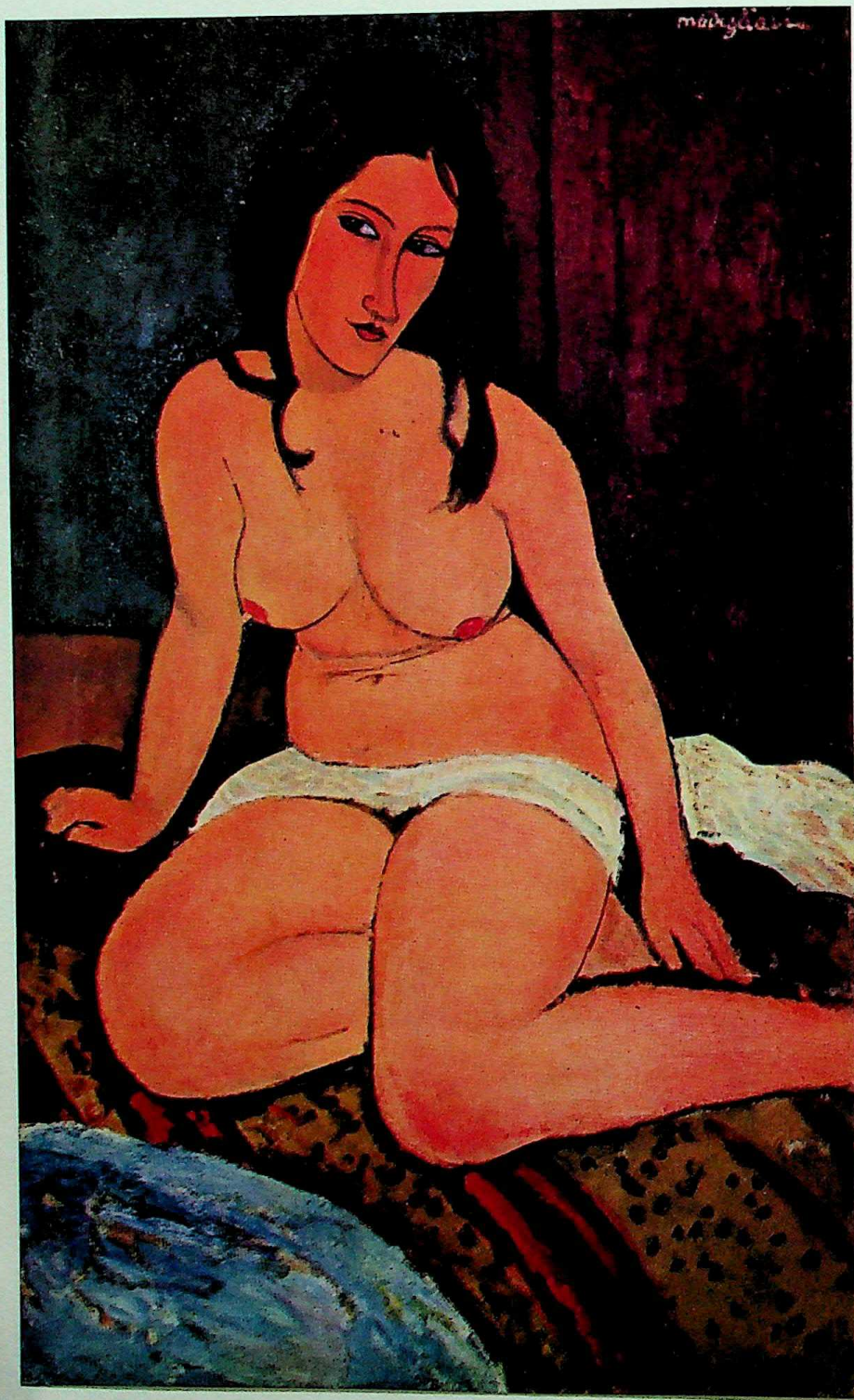
are above all produced by the masterly drawing of an artist who excels in spinning a line and building by contour, detaching the forms against vast, empty backgrounds of expressive bareness. Powerful architecture, obtained by the simplification of the surfaces and masses, an underlying geometric organisation add considerably to the impression of tragic grandeur of these figures. Liberating the character by means of this structure no less than by his line which is insistent light, cruel and tender in turn and always eloquent, Picasso by restraint and an apparent indifference achieves an almost unbearable intensity of effect. An Expressionist who gives the appearance of trying to avoid Expressionism, it is as an opponent of Expressionism that he seems to range himself when he opposes the casualness with which he treats his subjects to the normal Expressionist self-identification with theirs. Without hate or love, more detached from his subjects than Toulouse-Lautrec who at any rate indulged in scorn and condemnation, Picasso, the impassive foreigner, succeeds through his objectivity in surpassing the result that the others attained by complete surrender to subjective technique. It is Picasso's first manifestation of his surprising art in which nothing is ever what it seems to be, and it is with means far removed from Expressionism that between 1900 and 1906 he builds an edifice that is typically Expressionist.

Where can works as personal as Modigliani's be fitted in? He learned less in his native Italy from a descendant of the Macchiaioli than from masters of the Tuscan *trecento* and *quattrocento*, and when he arrived in Paris he fell under numerous influences among which the chief were Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne, Negro art and painters and sculptors who were busy "negro-ising". After trying his hand in various *genres* and finding his first real form of expression in sculpture, he arrived at pictorial maturity about the year 1915 as an interpreter first of Fauvism then Cubism, but with what can only be described as an Expressionist bias. Lionelli Venturi is justified in writing that Modigliani "makes use of fashionable elements for the purpose of creating characters"³¹, and quoting as an example the Cubist nose of the man in the *Husband and Wife* painting in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in which his declared intention was to "draw attention to the painter's aversion for the portentous complacency of the bourgeois". The subsequent stylisations and distortions he was to impose on the human body, and even more strangely on the human face, are not only ascribable to his tendency towards mannerism but also to his need to interpret the model after its nature and its characteristics in such a way as to extract its essence — shyness of the *Young Boy* of 1916, complacency of *Diego Rivera* (1916), gracefulness of *Madame Zborowska*, elegant dandyism of *Roger Dutilleul* (1919), vulgar joviality of the *Burgundian Woman*, etc.

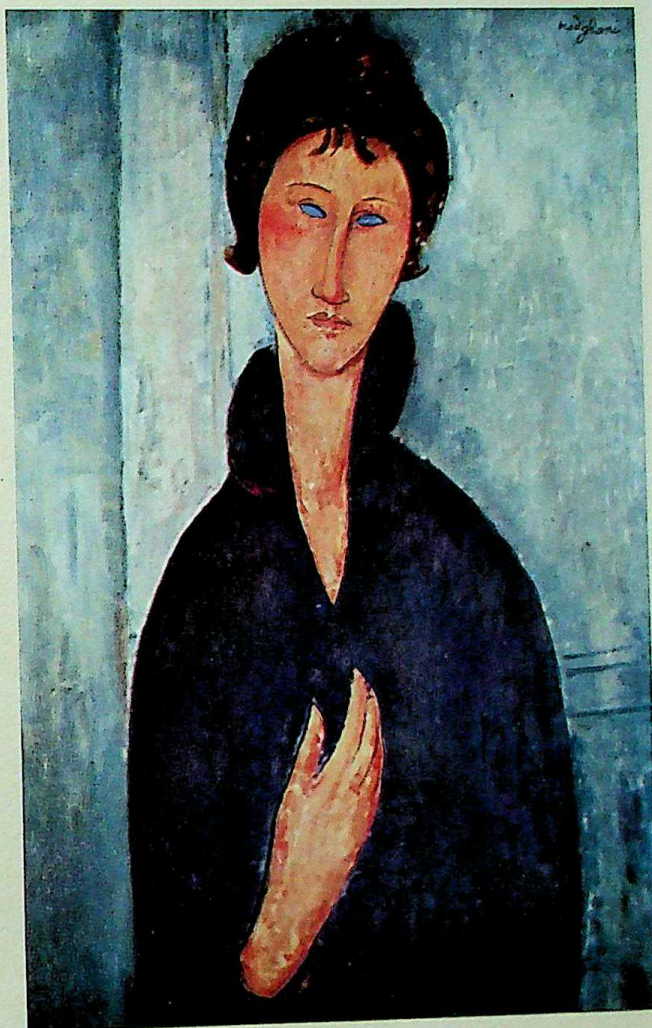
Such a treatment of the model would be enough to account for Modigliani's Expressionism. Other factors also testify to it. His indifference to everything that is not human (landscapes are extremely rare in his works which do not include a single still-life), his predilection, despite a few portraits of fashionable and intellectual people, for the humble, invalids, of whom he has left pictures full of tenderness and respect; the disembodiment which he imposes on them and which inevitably recalls the similar one which Picasso had imposed ten years previously during his "Blue" period; his weakness for a certain eccentricity and his liking for complications — private distress, deep-seated anxiety, with its harmonious yet poignant cry which



AMADEO MODIGLIANI - THE BRIDAL PAIR. 1915 - (0,55; 0,46) MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART (PRESENTED BY FREDERICK CLAY BANTLETT), NEW YORK



AMADEO MODIGLIANI - SEATED
NUDE - (1,14; 0,74) MUSÉE
DES BEAUX-ARTS, ANTWERP



AMADEO MODIGLIANI - PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN
(0,81; 0,54) COLLECTION GIRARDIN, MUSÉE DES
BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS

one catches in all his creations, those nudes of a cerebral and disillusioned sensuality and melancholy portraits; his striving for effect which also reminds us of Picasso's and relies on restraint, an exquisite sobriety of palette and paint quality and the play of forms against great spaces of background to produce a shock on the spectator. From all these points of view the creator of *La Belle Épicière* (1917) the *Apprentice* (1917) the *Flower-Girl with Baby* (1919) and so many disturbing portraits of Beatrice Hastings, Jeanne Hébuterne and Mme Zborowska, certainly belongs to Expressionism.

But other preoccupations which belong to another order made an equal appeal to him. A liking for constructed form is evident in one who was also aware of decorative form and found a means of reconciling them in a highly individualised graphism. Modigliani's line, supple and pliable, punctuated with cunning interruptions, wonder-

fully ingenious and subtle, comes, when required, to the aid of other subterfuges of his invention such as the multiplication of view-points, obtained and suggested by the division of the forms according to the change of axis and rupture of planes. Heads inclined to one side, breaks in the elbows and wrists, crossed legs; by that dislocation of the form which still retains its identity, the young master animates forms which have three dimensions in terms of two on his canvas. Draughtsman and constructor, Modigliani rediscovers that decorative plasticity which his great ancestors of the *quattrocento* so happily cultivated and which, like some of them, he had the intelligence to ally with impeccable taste, consummate skill and elegant reserve to the expressing of character and his feeling for intensity.

Thus, passing beyond an Expressionism to which he none the less belongs, Modigliani seems to me to occupy a unique and all-important place as a link between Picasso and Soutine, between the Expressionism of 1900 and that which in 1920 with its new wave beat against a kind of painting that for ten years had been mainly concerned with purely plastic considerations.

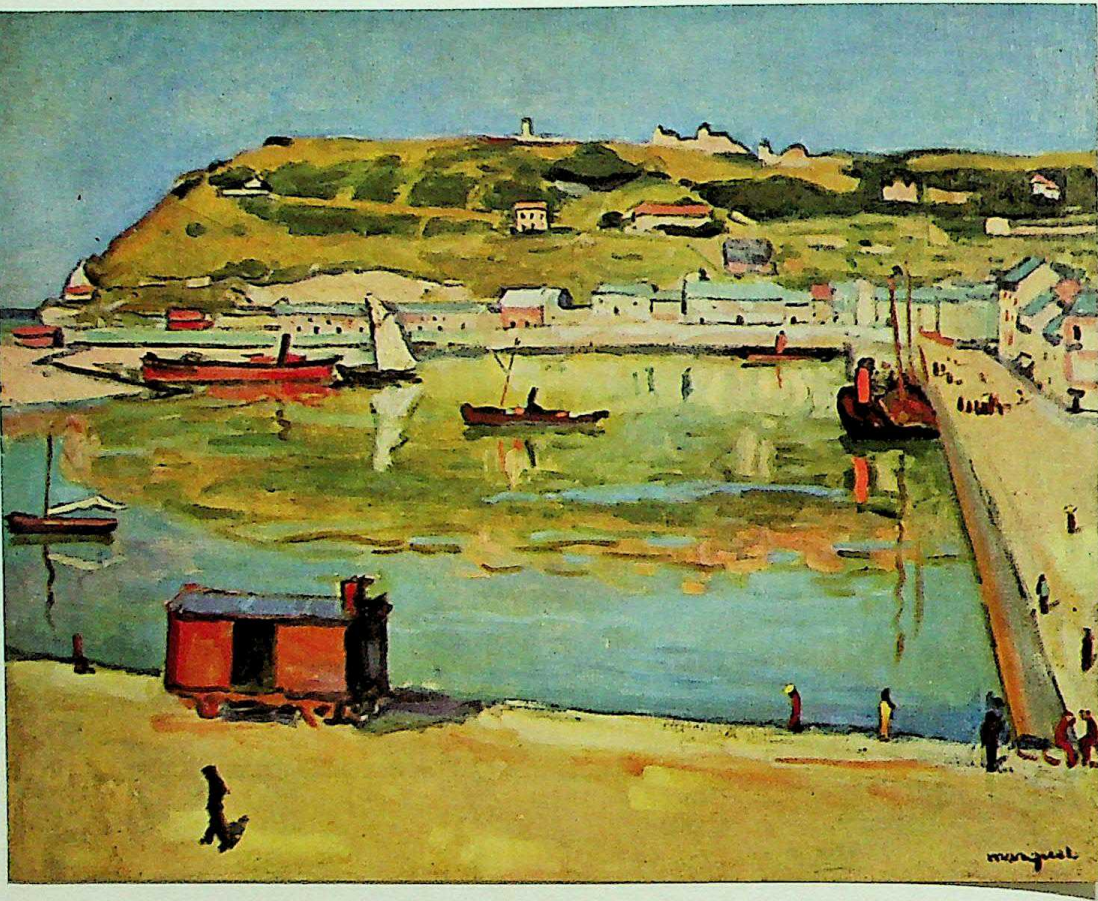
Fauvism

THERE is no great gap between the first wave of Expressionism in its manifestations about the turn of the century and its contemporary, Fauvism. This is particularly true at the time when the latter could claim Vlaminck as its champion, some of whose works (*At the Counter*, 1900, for example) are very much on the borderland of both movements and who said, "Fauvism was neither an invention nor an attitude but a way of living, acting and thinking". It implies the same subjective conception of painting, the same indispensable hypertrophy of the artist's personality, the same exaggeration of the lived experience to make it more communicable, the same seeking after effect. And the same means were used to obtain the said effects, namely, synthesis, suggestion, conciseness, disruption. It was however the livelier interest the Fauves showed in plastic problems — the most immediately perceptible manifestation of which was their passion for violent colour — that created a lacuna between the partisans of Expressionism and those of the new movement.

If the Fauve is less exclusively subjective than the Expressionist, less strongly possessed by the passion for character, less attentive to the mystery of both people and inanimate objects, it is because as one who is unconcerned with metaphysical or social anxieties he is not so much a prey to human problems, and his mind, from which all pessimism is debarred, is sometimes tenanted by indifference, sometimes even by joy. His vital reaction, if I may express it thus, is not the same, and because of this, neither are his conscious affinities. The Fauves were less enthusiastic about Toulouse-Lautrec whom Dufy looked at a good deal, and transferred their admiration to other

masters. Their cult of Van Gogh has perhaps been overemphasized. Matisse doubtless even before 1905 possessed Van Goghs, which he lent to the exhibition organized in the master's honour by the Salon des Indépendants in 1905, but he does not appear to have been inspired by them; and although Vlaminck, as he has himself admitted, was intoxicated by the exhibition at the Bernheim gallery, the influence of the Dutch genius was evidently not at the root of his admirer's Fauvism. It illuminated it, influenced it in the direction of more colour — but that is all. One of the two was manifestly Fauve by 1900 and the Retrospective exhibition did not take place until March 1901 after a long period during which, since the show of 1892 at Le Barc de Boutteville's gallery, there had hardly been any opportunity of seeing the Dutchman's painting in France. So, as much as and more than the example of his works, we must consider Gauguin's and those of his imitators Vuillard and Bonnard of 1890, whose influence on Matisse and Derain, among others, was decisive. We must also take into account the influence of the Neo-Impressionist canvases which were there for anyone to see at the annual Salon des Indépendants. There is no doubt that Signac and Cross, if not Seurat, exercised an important influence on Matisse, Marquet and Derain. That of Cézanne was equally important on Matisse who, following the steps of the Master of Aix, undertook several experiments in constructivist colour. Finally we should not forget that Manet had been the first to embark on this simplification of the artists' *métier* — painting in large areas of contrasting colours, elimination of values and modelling which the Fauves were to adopt. How many of Van Dongen's figures are offspring of Manet's *Piper*, not to mention the masterly *Portrait of Rouveyre* painted by Marquet in 1901 and the *Portrait of Marquet* done that same year by Camoin! We must not neglect the influence of Japan, vital, I think, on Marquet's drawing, Derain's colour, considerable on the work of Matisse. Did he not show a *Japanese Lady* (No. 719 in the catalogue) in the Salon d'Automne of 1905 and a *Young Lady in Japanese costume by the Water's Edge* (No. 714) and furthermore paint a triptych *The Three Sisters* in 1916, which, as Alfred Barr has rightly asserted, more than to triptychs of the Middle Ages was indebted to the art of the Empire of the Rising Sun? The artistic horizon of the Fauves is thus very different from that of the Expressionists, although they are indebted, like one of the latter, Rouault, to Gustave Moreau whose teaching gave rise to one of the streams which joined others to form the great Fauve river.

It was in fact in Gustave Moreau's studio that Matisse learned in the year 1895 his most important lessons and met not only Rouault but Camoin, Manguin, Linaret, Flandrin and Charles Guérin and others before he was joined in 1897 by Marquet whom he had known for five years. Moreau's death the following year and his replacement by the academic Cormon caused the exodus from the École des Beaux-Arts of these artists, who remained no less bound to each other, particularly Matisse and Marquet who worked together. Benefiting by the masterly lessons of Moreau, Matisse — who up to 1898 had practised painting that was respectable enough to win admittance to the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts — seems to have only awaited the death of his professor, the discovery of Impressionism in 1896 and of the landscapes of the Midi, Corsica and Languedoc in 1898, to paint from that time on canvases which justify Marquet's statement, "Matisse and I were already working before the Exhibition (1900) in the year 1898 in what was to become known later as the Fauve manner. The first Salons des Indépendants in which we were, I believe, the only two painters to express ourselves in pure tones, go back to 1901³³".



ALBERT MARQUET - FÉCAMP HARBOUR. 1905 - (0,80; 0,64) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

Meantime he attended the Académie Carrière where he had met Laprade, Chabaud, Jean Puy, and most important of all, Derain. The latter had linked up that same year of 1899 with Vlaminck, his neighbour in Chatou, and a bond of friendship between these two artists was so quickly and strongly forged that for a time they shared the same studio at Chatou and painted alongside each other the same suburban subjects in the same spirit — that is to say in that of Vlaminck who has claimed his priority and superiority in the following uncompromising words, “What is Fauvism? It is I. It is my manner of the period... No doubt I infected Derain to some extent³⁴”.

Experiments on the part of Vlaminck, likewise on the part of Matisse. It needed Derain to establish contact between these two pioneers by introducing them to each other on the occasion of the Van Gogh exhibition of March 1901. We have the confirmation of Matisse who remarked one day to Georges Duthuit, “I knew Derain through having met him at Eugène Carrière’s where he was working, and I was struck by the very serious and painstaking work of this highly gifted young man. One day when I was at Bernheim’s in the rue Laffitte at the Van Gogh Exhibition I noticed Derain accompanied by an enormous youth who was voicing his enthusiasm in authoritative tones... (Derain) came up to me and introduced Vlaminck³⁵.” The two men

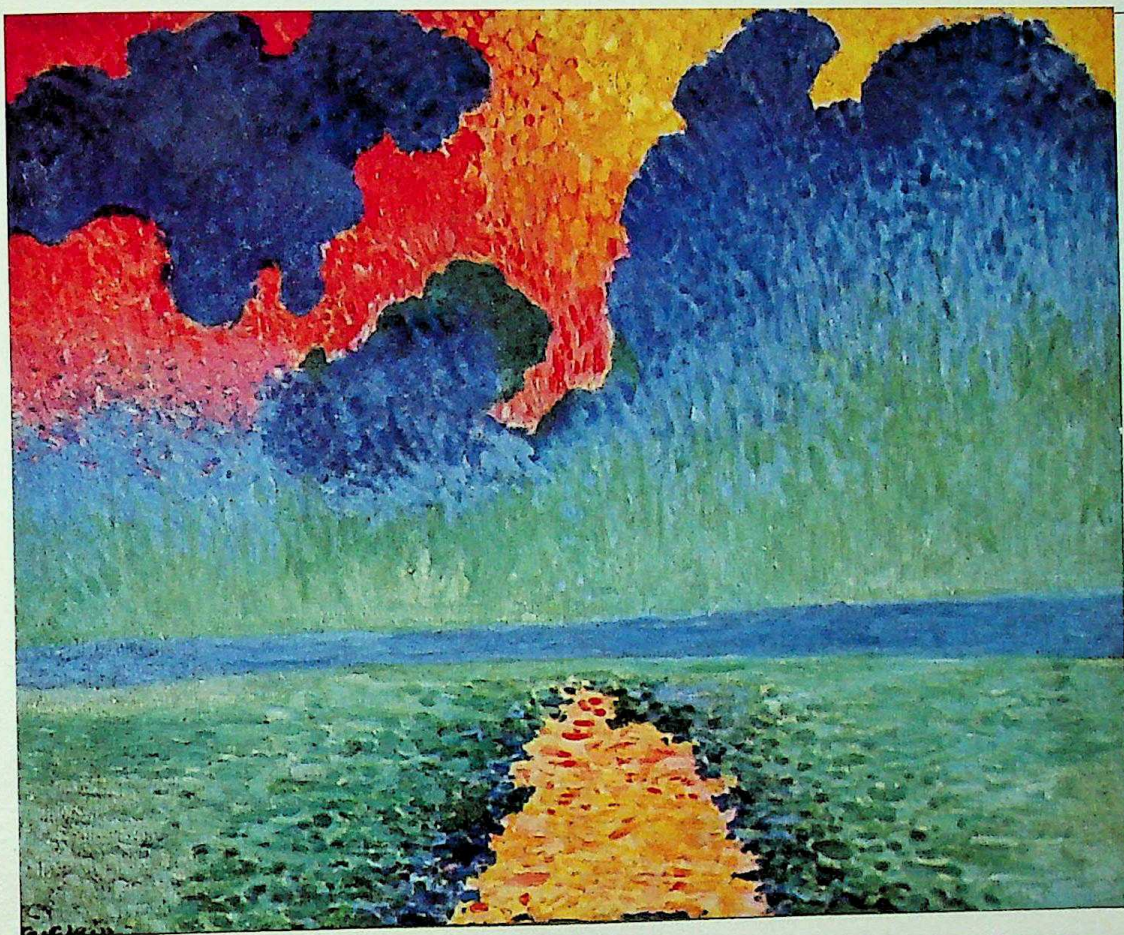
did not take to each other, and the experiments of one did not affect the other in spite of the fact that Vlaminck has wrongly claimed that "this meeting (1901) was decisive for him (Matisse).³⁵" He seems to have had little influence on the painter of *Luxe* with whom one is tempted to agree when he writes, "There was nothing to surprise me in Derain's and Vlaminck's painting for it had affinities with the experiments that I was carrying out myself, but I was moved to see that here were extremely young men sharing convictions akin to my own³⁵." At any rate these two tributaries swelled into a river that gained in power inasmuch as, from 1905 onwards, the champions of the new painting started to hold joint exhibitions. Matisse had already appeared on the platform of the Indépendants in 1901 in the company of Marquet and continued to show there during the following years. As a member of the hanging committee in 1902 and 1903, he exhibited with Manguin, Marquet and Puy, the first of these years and with Camoin, Manguin, Marquet and Puy the second. Promoted in 1904 to the dignity of assistant secretary of this Salon where, like Manguin and Marquet, he was a member of the hanging committee, he showed there with his four friends before Derain and Vlaminck joined them in 1905, and also exhibited with the group in the Salon d'Automne that same year.

MAURICE DE VLAMINCK - FISHERMEN AT NANTERRE. 1906 - (0,99; 0,81) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS



These exhibitions won over Van Dongen whose first contributions to the Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne date from 1904, Marinot who made his début in 1905, and a trio from the *atelier* Bonnat at Le Havre, namely Friesz, Raoul Dufy and Braque. Having arrived in Paris in 1897 with a bursary from his native town, Friesz was receiving lessons, though not very eagerly, from the painter of the Presidents of the Republic when he was joined in 1900 by the second, a similar beneficiary. They attracted Georges Braque to them for a few months but the latter, horrified by Bonnat's teaching, lost no time returning to the Académie Humbert. The contacts between the three companions remained close nevertheless, and they all participated in the new Fauvism. Friesz from 1903, Dufy and Braque a little later. From that time on they exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants, Friesz and Dufy from 1903, Braque from 1906. As for the Salon d'Automne which was still in its infancy, Friesz exhibited there in 1904, Dufy in 1906 and Braque the following year. The new painting was thus becoming known to the public more effectively than through the medium of the somewhat "closed circle" exhibitions which one valiant Montmartre gallery, directed by Berthe Weill³⁶, alone consented to arrange.

The public, as might be expected, was hostile, as were the critics who nicknamed the painters in question the *Fauves* (wild beasts). They began by dubbing them "incoherent" or "invertebrate". The brother of one of their number, Michel Puy, refers to it in his book *The Struggle of Modern Painters*, and the critics did not pull their punches. I have quoted the remarks of Marcel Nicolle and J.-B. Hall in my *Landmarks of Contemporary French Painting* which are rivalled in virulence by F. Monot's philippic in *Art et Décoration*. "The tone is still set in the Salon d'Automne by this same group of new and curious colourists who made a reputation at the *Salon des Indépendants*... and who have gone astray because of their emphasis on improvisation and incoherence and their refusal to consider the elements of order, selection and application... who treat painting as a hazardous and inconsistent making-up of pattern, colour as matter without form... and who in flaunting their weaknesses appear to derive satisfaction in an abundance of errors, and find reasons for complacency in their ignorance of the elements of the craft of painting³⁷". Even enlightened spirits sat on the fence. Particularly significant from this point of view is André Gide's *Promenade au Salon d'Automne*. After long eulogies of Maillol, Vuillard and Bonnard, the author devotes the following passage to Matisse, "in order to be more accommodating I am willing to admit that M. Henri Matisse possesses the finest natural gifts. The fact is that he has already given us works full of a more felicitous vim and vigour... The canvases which he shows today look like so many expositions of theorems. I stayed a long time in this room. I listened to passing remarks, and when I heard some one shout "It's madness" in front of a Matisse, I felt a desire to reply, "No, sir, on the contrary. It is the result of much theorizing." Everything can be deduced and explained; intuition does not enter into it. Doubtless when M. Matisse paints this woman's brow apple-green and this tree-trunk pure red, he can say to me, "It's because..." Yes, it is reasonable, this painting or, rather, rational. But how far from the lyrical exaggerations of a Van Gogh! And behind the scenes, I heard the remarks, "All the tones must be exaggerated." "Grey is the enemy of all painting", "Let the artist never be afraid of going too far." "M. Matisse, you let them say these things to you!" And Gide ends by exalting moderation as against the enormities of Matisse and his disciples in these words, "Art is not concerned with extremes; it is a temperate affair. Tempered by what? By reason indeed! But by reasonable reason³⁹."



ANDRÉ DERAÏN - SUNSET OVER THE THAMES. 1906 - (0,81; 1,00) MUSÉE DE L'ANNONCIADÉ, SAINT-TROPEZ

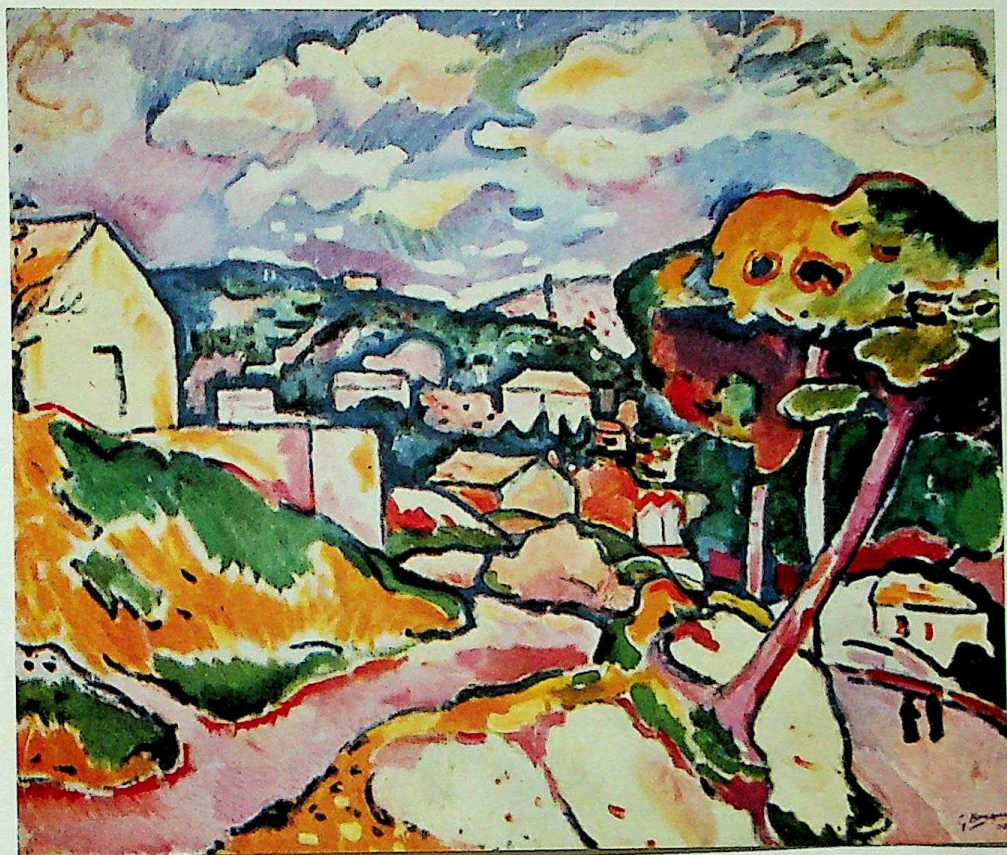
Irritated by this organized protest, the sponsors of the Salon d'Automne, powerless to eject these "incoherents" who found defenders among the committee, Desvallières and Rouault in particular, decided the following year to clear the ground by segregating the "invertebrates" in a kind of ghetto. Camille Mauclair in *Art et Décoration*⁴⁰ states, "A dozen exhibitors continue quite unperturbed to show pretentious, ignorant, stupid works which it would be ingenuous even to censure... Their fellow-artists have judiciously hung them together in the same room, well-lighted, incidentally... These gentlemen are there at their ease to fire off their fireworks of splashes at point-blank range." Just as sculpture had been "disseminated through the rooms", a statuette by Marque was surrounded by pictures by Camoin, Derain, Van Dongen, Dufy, Friesz, Manguin, Marinot, Marquet, Matisse, Puy, Valtat and Vlaminck, victims or beneficiaries rather of this segregation. On seeing it in such company, the critic Louis Vauxelles uttered his famous exclamation "Donatello among the wild beasts" which was to fix the final label of *Fauves* on the erstwhile

"incoherents". The comparison was on every tongue to such an extent that shortly afterwards Maurice Guillemenot wrote in *L'Art et les Artistes*, "respectable citizens still stand dazed in the Fauves room⁴²" and Vlaminck is "one of those who roar the loudest among the *Fauves*". The following year⁴⁴ the gallery in which the contributions from Braque, Camion, Derain, Dufy, Friesz, Henri Matisse, Manguin, Marinot, Valtat, Vlaminck and Marquet were assembled was likewise dubbed that of the *Fauves*⁴⁵, but the hanging committee did their best to make it innocuous by a system of hanging that called forth the following protest from the critic, Charles Malpel, "For their (i.e. the Fauves) benefit, the most cunning disorder, the most organized mix-up has been adopted." Matisse hung cheek by cheek with Friesz or insidiously alternated with Derain and Dufy. Despite these precautions Fauvism was from now on famous, if not admired, and the history of art had a new chapter heading.

It had no sooner impressed itself on everyone's notice than it abruptly came to an end. Last to come, first to go, Braque tones his colours down and in the summer of 1907 vigorously emphasizes the structural side of his painting before executing during the autumn, after seeing Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, the famous *Nude* of the Cuttoli collection. Derain arrives at similar conclusions in his *Dance* of 1908 and still more in his *Women Bathing*, painted during the same year. Following a parallel development, Dufy produced his painting *Among the Flowers* in 1907, — a prelude to the hot, sombre landscape he executed at Le Havre and Sainte Adresse the following year, — in lower tones and with a more insistent linear structure. As for Friesz, "the chain of truths discovered during our *fauve* period led us back to construction, to extract the maximum of expression from forms, which I attempted to formulate in a large-scale picture *Work in Autumn* of 1906", as he rightly observed. Marquet moves towards greys — treated it is true as if they were colours — and proved himself an exquisite master of them in the pictures painted at Hamburg in 1909. The minor Fauves came down on the side of Impressionism. Matisse alone held out... Thus by 1909, possibly 1908, the life of Fauvism had come to an end.

Various explanations can be put forward, some on artistic, others on human grounds, to account for this sudden death. It was the result of friendship — friendship that dragged it down to its own grave. Relations between the Fauves before 1908 had been both frequent and fervent. We have already quoted the examples of Matisse and Marquet, likewise very closely linked with Manguin to whose studio they often repaired to paint from the life. Vlaminck had taken Derain along with him to Collioures in 1905, Marquet had worked at Trouville in 1906 alongside Dufy who joined Friesz at Falaise shortly afterwards. The same year, 1906, had seen Braque and Friesz painting together at Antwerp. Now, in 1908, these bonds of friendship began to loosen or, to the extent that they held together, it was in resistance against Fauvism. Braque lured Dufy who stayed with him at l'Estaque in 1908 towards other horizons, and Dufy's and Friesz' joint trip to Munich set the seal on their estrangement from Fauvism. Vlaminck and Derain quarrelled, and from that moment the latter began to frequent Picasso, Apollinaire, Kahnweiler whose gallery in the "Bateau-lavoir" was the sanctuary of Cubism. Matisse hardly ever saw him and Vlaminck never. Each was following his own path...

But they were all tired of Fauve orgies. Like debauchees who aspire to penitence, seeing it as the only way out, they sought after a more austere, less violent art



GEORGES BRAQUE - LANDSCAPE AT L'ESTAQUE. 1906 - (0,60; 0,73) MUSÉE DE L'ANNONCIADE, SAINT-TROPEZ

that might have other outlets. "It was scarcely possible to advance any further in the method we adopted at that period... You could not remain in a state of paroxysm indefinitely⁴⁷." Vlaminck's confession in *Tournant dangereux* echoes Braque's pronouncement in these words "I suffered from an inability to strike harder, from having arrived at the maximum of intensity, circumscribed as I was by the blue and red of an artists' colourman⁴⁸." And Derain concludes, "So we have had to return to more discreet solutions, reserve for ourselves from the start an abundance of resources, patiently guarantee the canvas a long-term development⁴⁹."

And, at the critical moment along came a painter with a reply to their anxiety, Cézanne. Practically unknown before 1908 (Matisse and Rouault had been to all intents and purposes the sole painters to admire him prior to 1900) his work became famous, following the retrospective exhibitions of the Salon d'Automne of 1904, 1905 and 1906 and especially the Memorial Exhibition of 1907. That of the year 1910, at the gallery of Bernheim the younger, was destined to disseminate his influence still further. Thus the god of Pont-Aven and the god of Saint-Rémy were succeeded by the god of Aix-en-Provence who advocated a more rigorous sense of form, more subdued colour (with an emphasis on blue), more deliberate composition, an art that was perhaps less "exterior".

Other influences worked in the same direction — negro sculpture, for example, which was discovered by Vlaminck in 1905 and passed on by him to Matisse and Derain who in his turn initiated Picasso at the Azon restaurant. It certainly contributed to move the Fauves and later the Cubists in the direction of construction and severity. Nor should we omit to mention the effect of popular illustration first on Vlaminck and then on Derain and Dufy, which doubtlessly led these artists, especially the latter two, towards a more soberly composed and more graphic art. Gothic sculpture and stained glass did not fail to attract Derain and Dufy which they allowed to move them in the direction of a “more drawn and constructed painting, a more contained coloration”.

Finally, above all perhaps, Fauvism contained within itself its own imminent death sentence, as we can soon learn from an analysis of its ethics and aesthetics.

Truly a difficult analysis. Highly unacademic, rather the product of a hankering after total liberty, Fauvism left its champions free to express their personalities so completely that artists of widely differing temperaments were able to work side by side entirely at their ease.

First, Matisse, lucid, conscientious, obstinate, hardworking even, conscious of whatever he does, cultivated, an experimenter, all intelligence and reserve, who asks for suggestions from various masters, never progressing by more than one step at a time, hesitates between various courses which he sometimes is endeavouring to reconcile, and haunted above all by problems of pure painting, sometimes appears to suffer from a “lack of humanity⁵⁰”. Next Vlaminck, intuitive and spontaneous, uncultured or affecting to be so, who paints almost from the solar plexus, does not experiment, does not develop, cultivates the disorderly and builds up an entirely expressionistic conception of painting. “I wanted to be known in my entirety, with my qualities and defects... Painting was an outlet for me, a running sore⁵¹”. The gulf is no less great between Marquet, sensitive and refined who beneath a simple and quiet exterior hides a considerable determination and imperturbable assurance, and Derain, weighed down with erudition, a mass of anxiety, hesitant and feeling his way, all the more changeable in his desire to progress, and obstinate in his audacity which often arises from his personal distresses. The powerful temperament of Friesz forms a contrast with the alert intelligence of his friend Dufy, just as the instinctive and sensual, generous and wily nature of Van Dongen does with that of Braque in whom the dominating qualities are the most perfect sensitivity, the most severe attitude towards himself, conscience and deliberation.

What common denominators can one find in their productions, so rooted in their personalities that it is from that source alone that they originate rather than from a doctrine that is alien to the very spirit of their movement?

It would be idle to search among the Fauves for a theorizer like Signac, Sérusier or Maurice Denis. They did not go to the trouble of setting down on paper the experiments they were conducting, except Matisse in the somewhat brief and confused account he published in *La Grande Revue* (25th December, 1908). These famous *Notes d'un Peintre*, a few observations collected by Georges Duthuit and published in his *Fauves* in 1949, sundry passages in Derain's correspondence and the fertile literature of Vlaminck, in his *Tournant dangereux* of 1929 in particular, are the sole explanations vouchsafed by the Fauves on Fauvism. Few and far between though they are,



RAOUL DUFY — POSTERS AT TROUVILLE. 1906 — (0,73; 0,60) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

they suffice in conjunction with the paintings themselves to strike the spark that throws some light on this horizon of art.

Let us stand then in front of a Fauve painting, preferably one of the kind these artists poured out between 1905 and 1907. What strikes us first and foremost is the colour. Brilliant, even loud, the intensity stems from the fact that the painter has confined himself to exclusively pure tones, neither mixing nor breaking them up, and unified on their highest note, they are further emphasized by the contrast set up between each one. The actual application of the brush-stroke etc, left carefully in evidence, contributes to intensify the colour and produces a brutal expressiveness. The simplified drawing works both by suggestion and pattern. Perspective, modelling chiaroscuro are eliminated. No transitions or half-tones. It is a simple art which achieves its effect better through being frank, concise and allowing the maximum autonomy to each element in the picture by leaving it disconnected with any other.

But to register these factors is by no means to understand the spirit of Fauvism. Let us remind ourselves of Matisse's dictum to Georges Duthuit that this hysterical chromatism "is only the outward manifestation". Let us by considering the appearances try to discover the spirit that animated it. It is a creation of artists in whom youth developed a violent individualism to its maximum pitch; in revolt against academicism, Impressionism and the crushing mortgage of the past, Fauvism is primarily a painting that makes a clean sweep. "In art", Vlaminck decides in *Tournant dangereux*, "every generation must start again from the beginning. Art like love is an individual matter". Now what is most individual in any given individual? The intelligence whose capacity for abstraction defines the form by creating its boundary? Certainly not; and the Fauves replaced drawing by a kind of short-hand in which the line becomes a sign. Marquet's wonderful sketches are pieces of handwriting, masterpieces of visual acuity, intellect and manual dexterity, marvels of life, style and meaning, the rarest part perhaps of his work, the newest, the most original through which the master — replacing a natural product by superior art — ties up with the calligraphy of a Hokusai. Nor is my specific individuality to be sought out in my sensibility or feelings any more than in my intelligence. Where I am most myself and first and foremost myself is in sensation, *my* sensation, my raw sensation in which I come to grips with the external world and take up my own position in *opposition* to it. It is sensation then, his own sensation which the Fauve painter translates into pictorial terms. Now the only pasture Nature has to offer is colour. Delacroix had already noted this in a well-known passage in his *Journal*. So colour was to be the starting-point for the Fauves and the basis on which they built all their art, hence Matisse whom his friend Jean Puy has compared to a "valiant goldfish exulting in the iridescence of colours and forms seen through the distorting globe of his bowl and who — if he could paint — would show them without worrying about what they represent materially... emptied of their real substance and significance in the state of smiling ghosts for his wondering eye⁵³".

But it is not a question of the exact colour of the objects but of their *felt* colour into which actual colour is stirred up by all the agitation that it has called forth from the subject. Vlaminck for instance was to translate a russet tree-trunk by vermilion, the better to convey to us that he felt that he was experiencing red; the excess of this vermilion is thus the meeting-place of the object and the subject in which both the object and the painter are expressed and by which the artist transmits both his experience and the exterior world to the spectator.

But it is furthermore the sole means of rendering several facts, not only the local tone of the objects but also light, paint-quality, form and space. "The study of complementaries and contrasts led me to this conception, producing the equivalent of sunlight by means of a technique composed of orchestrated colours" Friesz has remarked; a theory that Derain and Matisse confirmed, one by professing that colours "should discharge light" and the other that "in Fauvism light is not suppressed but expressed through the encounter of intensely coloured surfaces". On the subject of painting-matter it is Derain's testimony which is this time the most explicit. "Even with our flat-tints we are mindful of our preoccupation with the mass, endowing the stain of sand, for example, with a heaviness which it lacks in reality in order to give the fluidity of the water and lightness of the sky their respective value". And concerning the expression of space by colour Matisse, contrasting Gauguin with his friends, confessed, "To qualify to be ranged with the Fauves, Gauguin would have

had to show that he constructed space through colour" analogous to the method he himself realised in his *Luxe* of 1907 and his admirable *Bathers with a Tortoise* of 1908 by the relationship he establishes between the figures and the strips of colour, the superposition of which constitutes the basis of the work.

The reason why Fauves favour colour so much is because its absolute potentialities fit in with their ideas of synthesis. Still more opposed to Impressionism from this point of view than even Gauguin and Cézanne, what the Fauve seeks and discovers beyond appearances and the immediate impression is the stable structure, the permanent character, the essential nature of beings and things. Matisse is equally categorical on this subject in his *Notes d'un Peintre*. "I have to paint a woman's body. I set about summarizing the significance of this body by searching for its

HENRI MATISSE - BATHERS WITH A TORTOISE. 1908 - (1,78; 2,21) COLLECTION JOSEPH PULITZER JR, SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

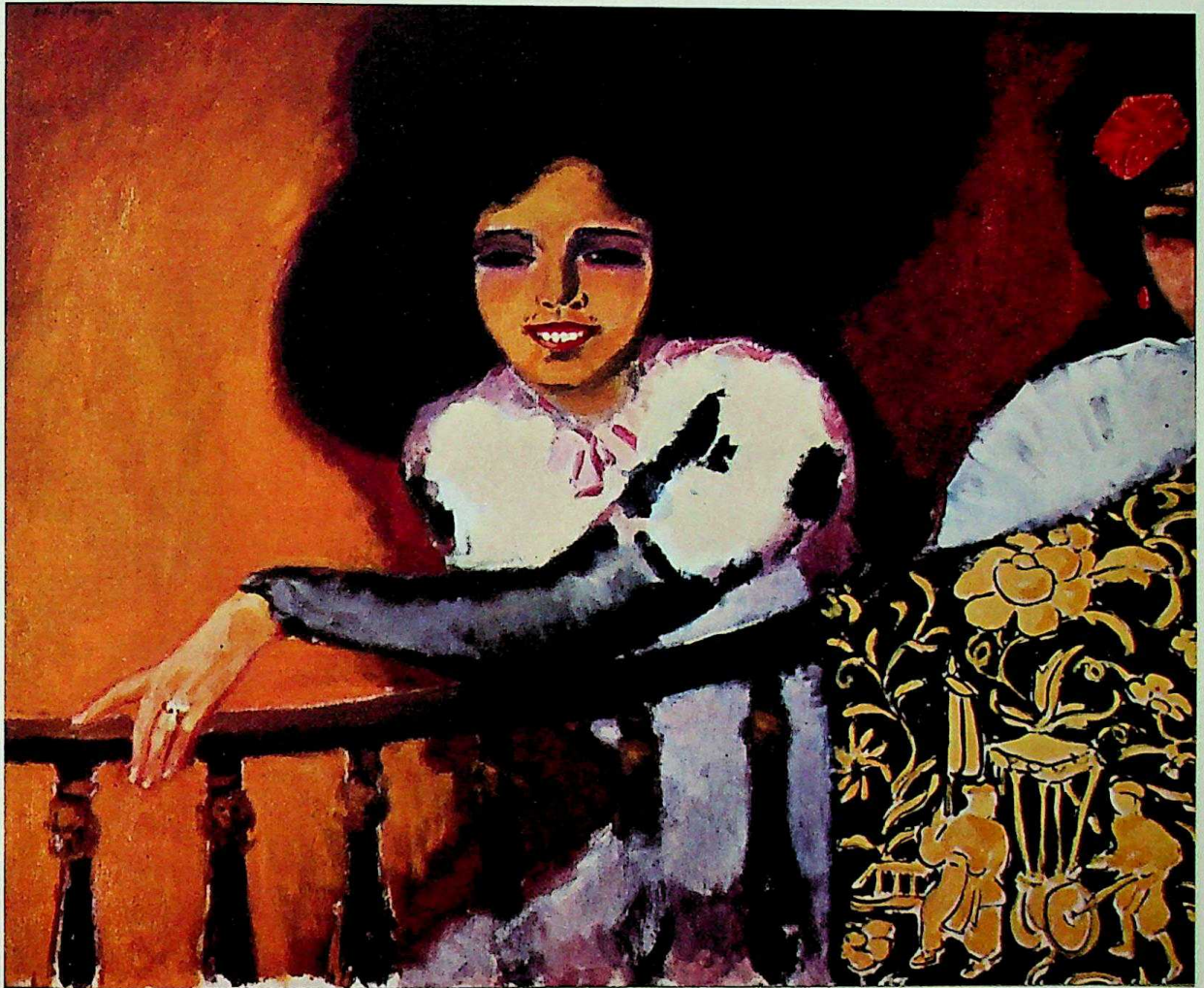


essential lines... A rapid transformation of the landscape will only convey a moment of its duration. I prefer, by insisting on its character, to risk losing charm in order to obtain more stability... Beneath this succession of moments which make up the superficial existence of beings and things and which clothes them with changing and short-lived appearances one can look for truer, more essential character which the artist should seize hold of if he is to produce an enduring interpretation of reality. All the more in that it will at the same time convey a truer expression of the artist in the permanence of his deepest personality. "If I remained at the stage of first approximations, I should have registered the fugitive sensations of a moment which did not entirely define me and which I should not easily recognise the day after; I want to arrive at that state of summarising sensations which makes the picture."

Art of colour and art of synthesis, Fauvism is ultimately an art of decoration, decoration, however, which is expression and monumentality. Hostile to the stylisation of nature which the Nabis were weak enough to accept, its champions rejected traditional perspective and modelling to achieve in their new expression of form and space, that emphasis on two-dimensional character which lends the picture its decorative quality. And the expressiveness and monumentality of their work comes from their unfailing concern to adapt it to the surround. Even in his pen and pencil studies, Matisse is possessed by this preoccupation. "Matisse takes cognizance of the rectangle formed by his sheet of paper whenever he draws", as Desvallières said so aptly in *La Grande Revue* of 25th December, 1908, adding that the master studied his drawing "so that the spaces left between the edges of the paper and the black line form an expressive decoration." With greater justification the painter aims, by the disposition of his forms and colours on the canvas, at producing a decorative dignity, inseparable from the power of permanent expression. "Expression for me" writes Matisse in his *Notes d'un Peintre*, "does not reside in the passion which blazes from the face or is observed in a violent gesture but in the whole arrangement of my picture. The place occupied by the figures, the space that surrounds them, proportions, all these things play their part. Composition is the art of arranging the various elements at the painter's command to express his emotions in a decorative manner."

But "as there is a necessary proportion of tones", he continues, "which can cause me to modify the form of a figure or transform a composition, the corollary to the decorative and expressive preoccupation of the Fauves is obedience to this need to distort reality — whether in the matter of colour or the relationship of volumes or proportions; and, in point of fact, the Fauve painter never jibbed at this necessary adjustment".

Jean Puy shrewdly puts his finger on it when, apropos of his friend Matisse, he remarks, "He did not hesitate to introduce extremely artificial devices in his pictures... frequently the planes of the nose and the shadow of the superciliary ridge were painted with touches of almost pure vermilion, and this had the effect of developing the general colour of the head and emphasizing the nose and forehead; or else a nude figure would be shod, as it were, with an orange-coloured shoe, always with the idea of giving a tang or savour to the whole colour-range of the picture⁵⁵". And Matisse himself confirms his friend's observations when he professes that, "Fauvism resulted from the fact that we have taken our stand far away from the colours of imitation⁵⁶". It follows that with the Fauves these tones are either exaggerated — above all in Vlaminck — or arbitrary, as with Friesz and Derain, or invented as those of Matisse, the boldest colourist in the movement.



KEES VAN DONGEN — SPANISH LADIES ON A BALCONY. 1907 — (0,81; 1,00) MUSÉE DE L'ANNONCIADE, SAINT-TROPEZ

As for line and form which are simplified and summarised in some cases — Vlamincx, Derain, Friesz, Van Dongen — they can be described as really re-created solely in Matisse, and even then only in certain works — those in which a deliberate effort of will has emboldened him to yield to his taste for the Japanese or Persian arabesque. Thus, in *The Joy of Living* (1906) and in his two versions of *Luxe*, of which the latest is also the most daring, Matisse, freeing himself from all anatomical prejudice and subjection to reality, repudiates both realism, formal contour and structure in favour of imagined lines and volumes. By this means he is all the more successful in achieving the monumental decoration and expressive

architecture of the work. Considering the products of this group, one has the impression that Derain was speaking for all the Fauves when he confided to Vlaminck, "I am aware of the fact that the realist period of art is over⁵⁷."

A new milestone on the road which led Western painting away from the realism of the Renaissance towards contemporary non-figurative painting, if Fauvism had merely represented a step in that direction, it would still count among the great art movements of our time. But it is much more⁵⁸.

The fact that it is an attempt to gain effect by omission is important but not essential, for had not Toulouse-Lautrec and the protagonists of the first wave of Expressionism likewise proved by their example what benefits modern painting could gain by this ruthless process of subtraction? Similarly when it demonstrated by its results the "synthetic" potentialities of colour to which an absolute function is accorded, it would have been merely developing hints given by Cézanne and repeated by Gauguin, had it not drawn this grandiose conclusion from its findings concerning the power of colour, namely that other traditional resources of painting must be renounced. It is in this that the contribution of Fauvism was decisive. Gustave Moreau's prophecy to Matisse, "You are going to simplify painting" was fulfilled by Matisse and his friends. Consider for example the *Portrait of Rouveyre* (1904)

ANDRÉ DERAIN - VIEW OF CAGNES. 1910 - (0,60; 0,81) COLL. HERMANN RUPF, BERNE



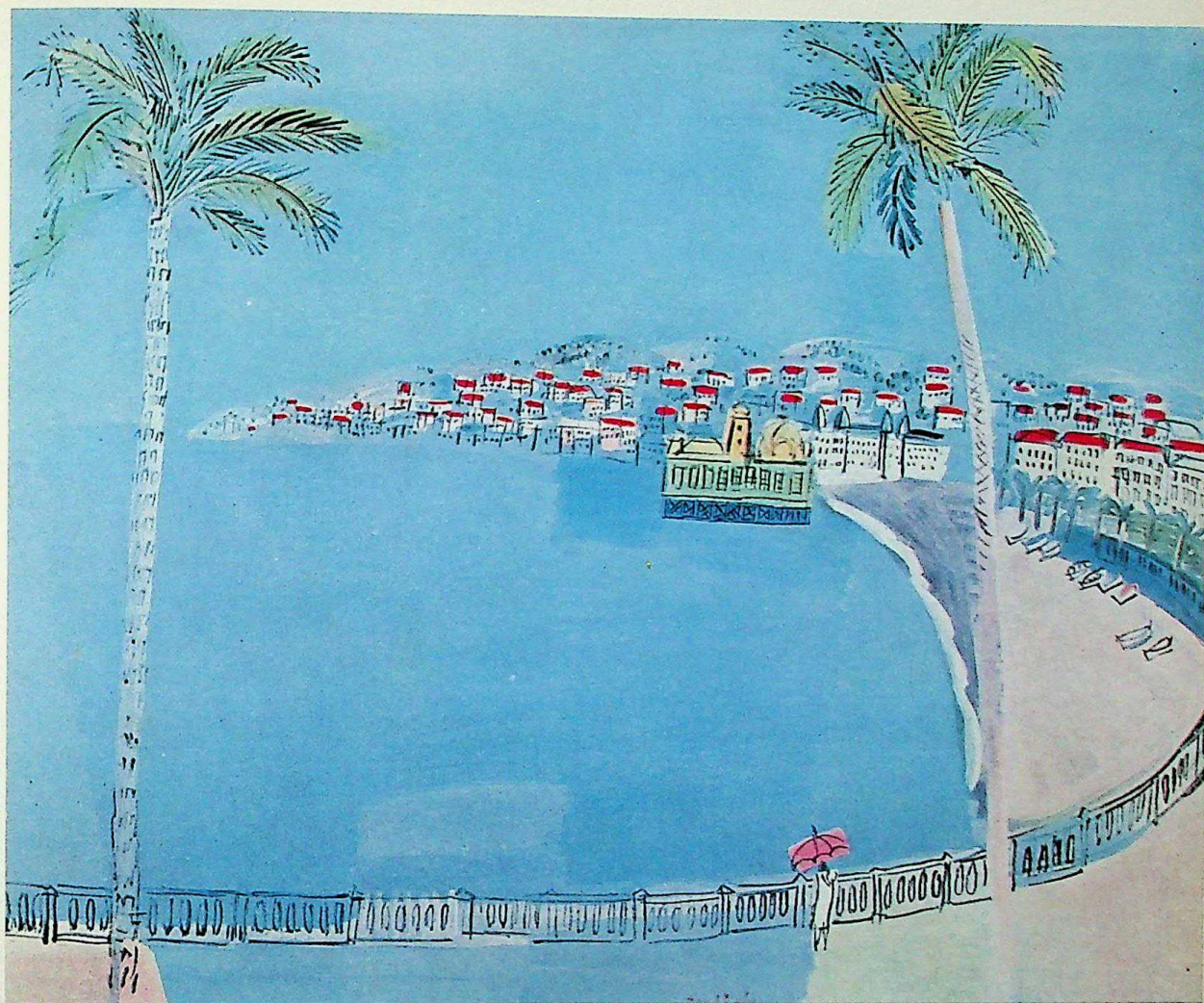
by Marquet, *Sunset on the Thames* (1906) by Derain, the many versions of *Beflagged Streets* by Dufy (1906), some of Van Dongen's portraits, Vlaminck's landscapes and still more those masterly works of Matisse, *The Young Sailor* (1906), *Dessert* (1905), *The Dance and Music* (1910), *The Blue Window* (1911), *The Red Studio* (1911) *Still-life with Aubergines* (1911-1921), etc..., and we can assess the importance of Fauvism which lies as much in its repudiations as its discoveries.

In its realisation, with Matisse, that "when the means are so attenuated and pared down and their power of expression becomes exhausted, you must return to the first principles which are at the basis of human expression — so that pictures which have become over-refined with their subtle gradations and ineffectual blends of colour call out for fine blues, reds, yellows, *matière* which can stir man's sensual nature", in its courage in repudiating resources which tradition considered to be necessities, in its renunciation of nuances and transitions, values and modelling, in its successful expression of everything by colour and, ancillary to this, the arabesque and composition, in its return to the austerity of the great periods of art (which is in point of fact their inestimable wealth), in this reduction of art to essentials—in all these ways the true greatness of the Fauve movement is revealed. Fauvism rejuvenated the art of painting by taking it back to the direct frankness of its origins and, in so doing, infused it with a new audacity which has borne it forward to further conquests.

It is a strange thing that the Fauves should not have been the first to benefit from this. Once their brief adventure was over the majority of them said goodbye to adventures in painting. Thus it came about that in 1908 the minor Fauves moved in the direction of an impressionism in which they continued, not without some subtlety and attractiveness. And so their modest "wild animal" roars were changed into gentle warblings. Marquet, likewise, from 1909 on, steered a course half-way between Impressionism and Fauvism. From the experience of his youth he retained his taste for solid forms, simplifications which lend vitality to the composition, witty figures, a well-constructed pictorial organisation. Thus, without falling into the faults of a Claude Monet or a Sisley, he was able to paint the harbours of Europe and the Seine at Paris with a coloration that is as right as it is delicate, with a broad and witty touch, an economic *matière*, a highly oriental combination of sensibility and humour, objectivity and very individual re-creation of his subjects. If any corpus of work can be said to illustrate the benefits of Fauvism, it is that of this sensible artist who, without for the most part forcing his talent, was able to paint everything with grace. Echoes of Fauvism often linger in the work of Van Dongen, after 1920 the accredited portraitist of fashionable Paris. Although a frequent victim of his own facility and success, the best of his portraits have felicitous audacities which lend them style. Here and there among his many paintings (*Portraits of Anatole France, Boni de Castellane, Jasmy Alvin*, etc.) the claw of the *fauve* reveals itself. For others, the renunciation of the adventure was preceded by a period of experiment in the course of which a proud Cézannism gives a good, strong, virile accent to their new manner. It is the case of Friesz and the works which he executed after his expeditions to Munich and Portugal (*The Women at the Fountain*, 1912). It is that of Vlaminck and his landscapes, solidly constructed, of coloration which gradually deserts blues (the *Bridge at Chatou*, 1910) for earth colours and greens, set



RAOUL DUFY - BAIGNEUSE. 1914 - (2,45; 1,82) COLL. ROELL-JAZ, SCHEVENINGEN, HOLLAND.



RAOUL DUFY - LA BAIE DES ANGES. 1927 - (I,50; I,32) PRIVATE COLLECTION, BRUSSELS

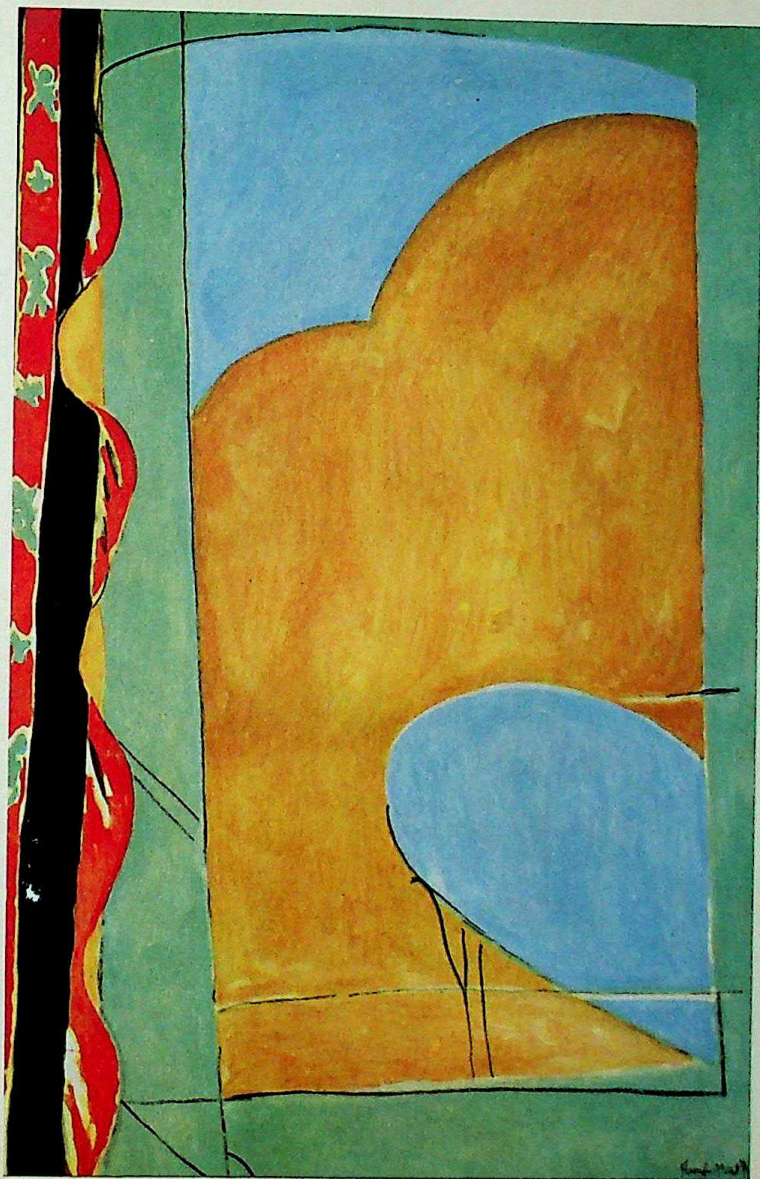
off by livid blacks and whites (*The House with the Shutters*, 1920). It is above all the case of Derain whose love of Cézanne and negro sculpture led him in 1908 to accompany Picasso a short distance on his new road. But recoiling before Cubism, he looked to Gothic art, that of the sculptors and painters, perhaps also to Douanier Rousseau, for the model of his austere still-lives, hieratic figures, frozen landscapes which he executed happily between 1910 and 1914. The "taking down" of his palette, a simple and taut design, ligneous modelling, contrasts of plane indicated by hard ridges, give *The Last Supper*, 1911, *Saturday Night*, the *Bagpipe player*, 1914, a solemn tension that is not lacking in beauty. But the three erstwhile Fauves now

leave their Cézannesque period for a traditional manner which takes place for Vlaminck under the sign of an expressionism as facile as it is artificial, for Friesz under that of a baroque eloquence and for Derain under a superficial classicism which is perhaps only academicism. Since they had been so reluctant to abandon if not the form of Fauvism, at least its spirit, would they not have done better to fall back into traditional art?

Thus one may well wonder whether among the champions of the Fauve movement Dufy and Matisse are not the only ones who persevered in the original direction. Like all their comrades they had their Cézanne crisis — the former before the latter. In 1908 in point of fact the gay, kindly Dufy went over to the school of austerity. His contact in the Villa Médici Libre d'Orgeville with André Lhote and Jean Marchand (1909-1910) the stained-glass windows in his neighbouring cathedral of Evreux, an ever-increasing enthusiasm for popular prints and the practice of wood-engraving (the *Bestiaire*, 1910), everything confirms him in his search for a more "written", more constructed, more monumental form which he creates in heavier tones of a muffled and deep sonority — prussian blues, emerald greens, violets encounter highly individual acid yellows in the paintings he executed between 1908 and 1919, and, strange to say, in the most characteristic works in this manner, the *Grande Baigneuse* of the Roëll-Jas Collection, the very subject of which is an admission of Cézanne's influence.

But this serious manner did not long survive his prolonged contacts with Mediterranean country. A lengthy stay at Vence (1919) a journey to Italy (1922-1923) influenced Dufy in the direction of a relaxed kind of painting. To this the period atmosphere of well-being, his work as a fabric-designer in the employ of Bianchini Férier, 1912 to 1930, and in ceramics in which from 1923 he was along with Artigas responsible for many attractive masterpieces, was no less conducive. We witness a final fling of his old constructive spirit in his *Boatmen on the Marne* series (1919-1925) and then comes the triumph of light, transparent and luminous colour in which the blues are saturated with sunlight, the triumph of flexible drawing consisting of curves, interlacings, arabesques of a form that defy gravity, dynamic, full of verve executed *con brio* in a way reminiscent of Fragonard and Tiepolo and which, even more than in his oils, is to be found in the water-colours and gouaches — new techniques for Dufy, but media in which he immediately discovers the domain most suited to his genius. There is nothing insipid in his treatment of these genres nor in his favourite subjects — race-meetings, regattas and other events in the fashionable world; nudes or models in the studio; landscapes at Nice and Deauville. His gift for snatching the essential life from a subject and his airy sense of decoration submerge the anecdotal element in his work. His observation on the quay at Honfleur of a little girl running taught him — this is the year 1926 — that the eye is quicker to perceive the colour contour of an object than its contour and retains the colour-sensation longer; that colour and form are therefore independent; that the painter has no need therefore to enclose once within the framework of the other. He ceased to make them coincide in consequence, encouraged in this practice by the fact that old prints, ceramics, and tapestry — all the ancient decorative arts — testify to the felicitous effect which results from this autonomy. Determined by this method which translates the animation of life to the extent that it is decorative, his work becomes even more so through his insistence on

HENRI MATISSE — THE WINDOW. 1915 — (1,46;
0,97) COLL. MARCEL MABILE, BRUSSELS



a trichromatic composition in his paintings, constituted by the vertical or horizontal juxtaposition of three bands of colour each dominated by a predetermined tonality. Aided by drawing which is primarily calligraphic, miraculously agile, spirited and inventive, Dufy's art reveals an imagination, a discreet audacity, so airy as to pass unnoticed, a transcription of reality that is the continuance of the spirit of Fauvism. What could be more faithful to his taste for economy, plastic expression, re-created life feeling for decoration, the sensation re-discovered by the intelli-



HENRI MATISSE — DANCE. 1932 — CENTRE PANEL (3,60 ; 4,30) MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS

gence — one thinks of Proust — than *The Studio by the Sea* and *La Marne* of 1925, *La Baie des Anges* (1927), *The Hindoo Model* (1928), *Ascot Races* (1930) and *Cornfields on the Plain of Coulibeuf* (1933), dazzling and profound works beneath their gay exterior of a period summarised in the admirable *Horsemen in the Wood* of 1935 and above all in the decoration executed for the Pavilion of Electricity in the International Exhibition of 1937, one of the largest paintings in the world (32 ft × 195 ft) and Dufy's masterpiece.

His more continuous practice of decorative painting — which includes two large panels for the Monkey House at the Jardins des Plantes (1937-1940) added to his love of music, influenced him in the direction of his "tonal manner". While retaining the independence of colour from contour and his free calligraphy from his previous idiom, he abandoned his polyphonic prescriptions and painted the whole picture to a unified colour scheme. This is frequently black whose colour potentialities he boldly re-discovers (series of *Black Tramp Steamers* 1948) and still more frequently, yellow (*The Yellow Console*, 1948) red (*The Pink Pavilion*, 1948) and espe-

cially his beloved blue (*The Artist's Studio*, 1952). Dufy's colour used musically, superlative in paintings of orchestras to which he devotes many works, achieves a maximum freedom which is also a maximum effectiveness. The aged man, so wonderfully young, remained faithful even as late as 1950 to the discovery that he had made of Fauvism in the far-off days of 1905, when in front of Matisse's canvas, *Luxe, calme et volupté* in the Salon des Indépendants he had "understood all the new reasons for painting", and had experienced "the miracle of the imagination translated into terms of drawing and colour".

If the ascendancy of Matisse is peremptorily pre-established in the Fauve movement by this celebrated admission on Dufy's part, the master's whole career is a proof that always or almost always he was splendidly fauve.

The most fauve of the Fauves in his daring and non-realist approach, the least fauve in his lucidity, method and reserve, he who had been the most Cézannesque of the group — we know that he had bought the *Baigneuses* by the Master of Aix in 1899 — was the last to adopt this Cézannism which drove them all away from intense colour. The admirable compositions he brought back from his stay in Morocco (1911-1912) prove that he had kept faithful to bright colour, flat form, arabesque, expression by composition, all the Fauve experiments whose validity was doubtless confirmed for him by the journey he made with Marquet to Munich in 1910 to visit the Exhibition of Mohammedan art. More disciplined than his friends, with a strongly defined sense of structure, he doubtless felt less than they the need for a "cure" in construction and method.

It was therefore not before about the year 1914 that he adhered to a more Cézanne-like painting after a resistance which can perhaps be explained by his pride and fear of seeming to be influenced by Cubism, a movement which was, however, never far from his mind. But the *Woman with Stool* (1914), the *Portrait of Yvonne Landsberg* of the same year, the various *Studios of the Quai St. Michel* (1915-1917), the various *Window* pictures (1915-1916), the masterly *Piano Lesson* (1917) show the painter infatuated with an austere palette in which black, greys and ochres and firmer forms than in the past dominate. Sinuous arabesques give way to straight lines which are broken into segments or assembled according to right or acute angles. The rhythms are jerky, broken, elliptical. The transposition of natural sights is still bolder, the interpretation of space more radical. Matisse's art assumes one may say a rather contracted aspect which gives rise to a grandeur which it had not previously attained with so much strength. An inner tension is also noticeable, the result of his new experiments and the urge he felt to surpass his former work.

Every period of tension is necessarily followed by one of reaction. A series of favorable circumstances at the end of the First World War was responsible for this feeling of release in Matisse's art (almost contemporary with that which affected the development of Dufy and the gradual drift of Vlaminck, Friesz and Derain towards traditionalism, the evolution of the Fauves runs on parallel lines). Joy of victory, the discovery of Mediterranean scenery, his great fashionable and international success caused Matisse to drift towards a more comfortable idiom. A return to brilliant colour, less intense, less bold than that of his Fauve period but bright and fresh with red playing a preponderant rôle, return to a sinuous line, all-embracing suppleness, introduction of a slight and graceful modelling in the figures; recourse, for the sake

of obtaining effect, to such artifices⁵⁹ as the inclusion of floral-patterned wall-papers, earthenware tiles, flowered fabrics, oriental carpets — these are the features that characterize Matisse's manner between 1919 and 1927.

His favourite theme at this time is that his of *Odalisks*. The works of this period can be summed up in two words — ease and grace; ease in the artist's handling of a craft so sure of itself that it can allow itself to relax ; grace in the creation of a universe of children, young women, precious fabrics, flowers, idleness, luxury, light. Matisse was enjoying his success and to some extent forgot the Fauve spirit. Was facility lying in wait for him, and if so, what form did it take ?

Fortunately in 1928 he was once more seized by the desire to carry out new large-scale and forceful experiments. The *Decorative Figure against an ornamental*

HENRI MATISSE — MUSIC. 1939 — (I,15; I,15) ALBRIGHT ART GALLERY, BUFFALO, N.Y.S.





HENRI MATISSE - RED
INTERIOR. 1948 - (1,46;
0,57) MUSÉE NATIONAL
D'ART MODERNE, PARIS

background (1927) contains straight lines meeting at 90°, lines broken up into short segments, a pure, powerful form whose daring synthesis, individuality, provocative distortions bear witness to his bold inventiveness and aggressive will. The majesty of the construction, his manifest intention of being selective, grandiose and novel coincide, however, with some of the qualities of his preceding manner — richness of palette, suppleness of the arabesque ornament and decorative opulence.

The synthesis between the complementary tendencies of his genius thus realised — which up till then had been expressed successively — now became evident in all his works, above all after the execution of an enormous decoration, the *Dance* of the Barnes Foundation, the first state of which was at the Petit Palais, had evidently obliged the master to summon all his resources and take his bearings. It had provided him with an opportunity of faring forward more resolutely than ever.

Henceforward he is to make more demands on colour than he had ever done previously, whether he ventures on harmonies of tones of an intensified violence (*Music*, 1939), whether he prefers to establish a chromatic unity, often red, (*Still-life with Magnolia*, 1940, *Red Interior*, 1948) or whether he succeeds in transforming black into a colour radiant with light and of an almost unbearable intensity (*Woman reading against a black background*, 1938). The drawing was becoming both simpler and more severe, synthetic, loaded with short-hand summaries and suggestions, and of such daring that it makes the forms, superbly interpreted and re-created, live both organically and plastically (*The Rumanian Blouse*, 1940, *Asia*, 1946). The form, flat once more, possesses none the less a great power which it owes to the contour line, the tones which suggest mass and the rhythms which animate it with a straightforward frankness.

Matisse's world, invariably composed of young and handsome women, exotic plants, flowers, fruits, birds, luxurious objects, sun and *farniente*, testifies to an ever more daring imagination, a freedom that comes from mastery, and, through the painter's efforts to renew and surpass himself and become richer by divesting himself.

If the decoration for the Barnes Foundation is the starting-point of this final synthesis, the arrival may be said to be the chapel of the Dominican monastery of Vence (completed in 1950). There not only did Matisse say his last word as a painter — a painter who renounced colour and contented himself with white and an ochre with a hint of black in it — but furthermore crowned the experiments he had long been conducting in the other arts — engraving, sculpture, fabric-design, ceramics, stained glass, paper-cutting; the latter being a genre he practised a good deal after 1945 and in which he showed a wholly new side of his imagination in drawing. More than pencil, pen or brush, scissors afforded him the opportunity of combining a highly inventive graphism with a colour which surpasses the coloration of all his previous works in intensity. A triumph of pure colour and arabesque, these vast cut-outs by Matisse in which he is frequently very close to abstracts (*The Parakeet and the Siren*, 1953) are perhaps the highest and supreme discovery of his genius, less likely to have been arrived at intuitively than by experiment, method and logic. Thus the greatest of the Fauves who was also both the least *fauve* among them and yet possibly the only genuine one, excelled himself in this process of self-fulfilment.

Cubism

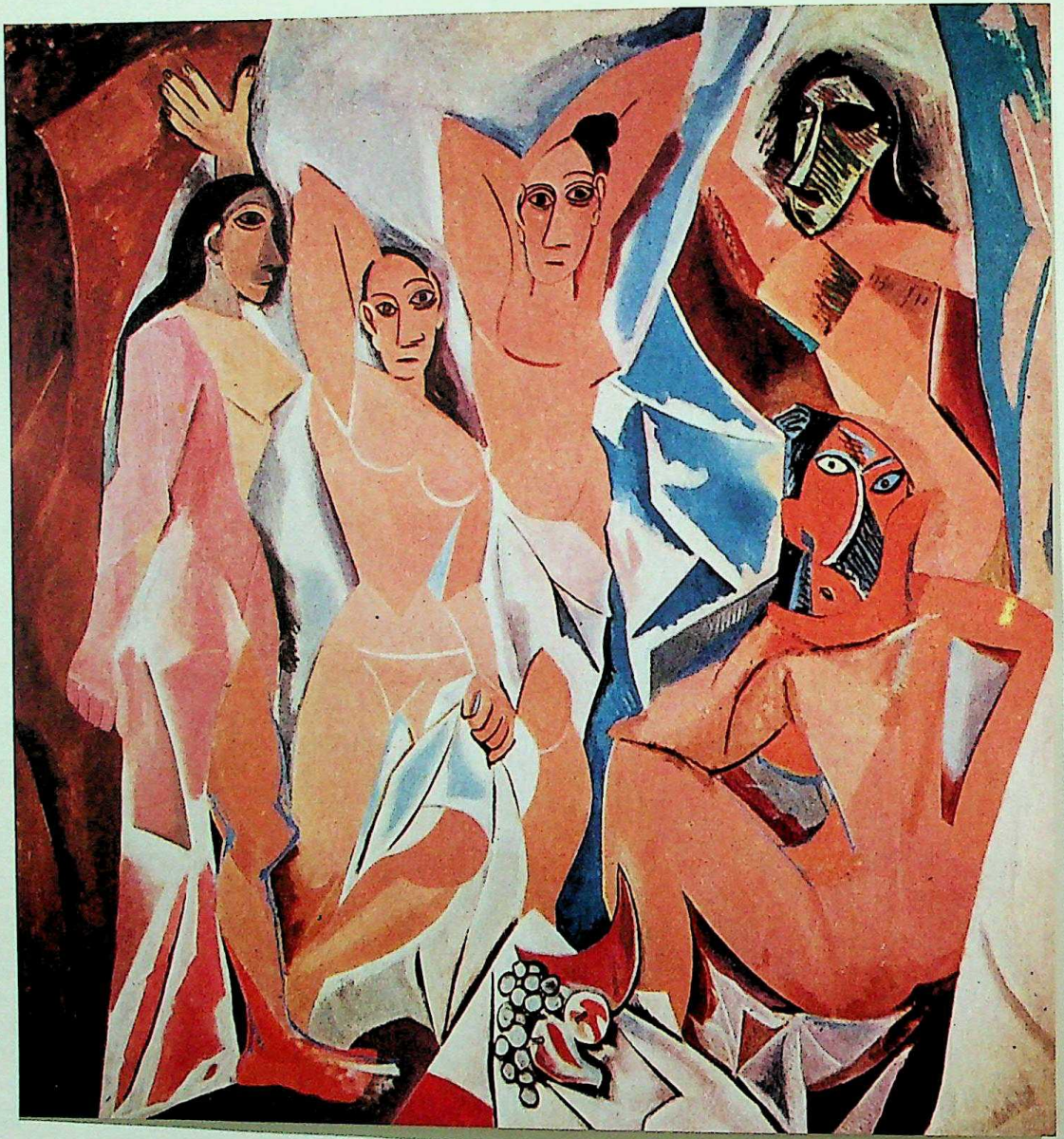
If the voice of a city councillor can reach you, I would beg, nay, implore you to pay a visit to the Salon d'Automne. Go there, Sir, and minister of state though you are, I hope you will come out feeling as nauseated as many other people I know; I hope indeed that you will whisper, "have I the right to lend a public building to a band of malefactors who behave in the world of art as criminals do in ordinary life?". These were the words of M. Lampe, the senior city councillor of Paris — he is making an apology to M. Bérard, under-secretary of state for Fine Arts in October 1912, following the inauguration of Cubism at the tenth Salon d'Automne.

Matters did not rest there. From the Hôtel de Ville the scandal reached the Palais Bourbon and M. Jean-Louis Breton questioned the Minister about the concession he had made in lending the Grand Palais for the Salon d'Automne: "It is in fact... absolutely inadmissible that our palaces should house exhibitions of such an anti-artistic and anti-national character", concluded the deputy, with the traditional competence of our politicians in painting matters. Marcel Sembat⁶¹ replied with a speech that concluded with these marvellous words: "When a picture seems bad one has an incontestable right, namely that of not looking at it, but of going off to look at other pictures. But one does not call in the police". The sitting of the Chamber on December 3rd, 1912 — which had sat unmoved during the Impressionist crisis of 1874 and that of Fauvism in 1906 — also marks the climax of the battle let loose by the new movement in painting which was attracting public attention and was already known as Cubism.

Actually it had been born five years previously when in the Spring of 1907, Picasso had painted his famous *Les Femmes d'Alger*, followed closely by a whole series of paintings and sculptures executed in the same spirit. Braque whom Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, an art-dealer then living at 28, rue Vignon, had introduced to Picasso during the autumn of that same year, had immediately painted his monumental *Nude* of the Cuttoli Collection, the more easily converted to these formulas in so far as he had just been carrying out experiments in the same idiom during the summer at l'Estaque and because this new art was then, so to speak, in the air. Novices — Léger in Paris, Lhote at Bordeaux — were no less affected than the erstwhile Fauves, and showed, like them, the same tendency towards a rigorous organisation of form, space and composition as well as an austere palette and drawing stripped to essentials.

Attracted by Braque and still more by Picasso who since 1904 had been living at 13, rue Ravignan in a timber structure which was nicknamed the "Bateau-Lavoir", poets such as Max Jacob, Guillaume Apollinaire with Marie Laurencin at his side, critics — Maurice Raynal, André Salmon — connoisseurs such as Gertrude and Leo Stein, Princet, dealers like Kahnweiler, composed an enthusiastic group round this new art which was working out its destiny in a similar fashion in the passage de Dantzig, at the other end of Paris, at the beginning of 1908. There at the "Ruche"*,

*) 'La Ruche' - the 'Beehive' - originally the Wine Pavillion for the Exhibition of 1900 and later bought by the sculptor, Alfred Boucher for the use of artist. (Translator's note).



PABLO PICASSO — LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON. 1907 — (2,44; 2,33)
LILLIE P. BLISS BEQUEST, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

Fernand Léger who shared a studio with Andre Mare formed a friendship with the sculptor Archipenko and the writer Reverdy, not forgetting Max Jacob. The most spectacular result of these experiments was the series of landscapes painted by Braque during the summer of 1908 at l'Estaque which were rejected from the Salon d'Automne by the horrified hanging committee⁶². Matisse, a committee member, speaking about these pictures referred to "little cubes" — a comparison that the critic, Louis Vauxcelles, borrowed when he reported in the 14th November issue of *Gil Blas* on the exhibition arranged by Braque of these pictures which had been ostracized to the Galerie Kahnweiler. "Braque scorns form," he wrote, reduces everything, sites, people, houses, to geometric patterns, cubes. Borrowing other people's metaphors, the critic in question, Vauxcelles, went on to discuss cubist eccentricities in *Gil Blas* (May 2nd, 1909) in connection with two contributions sent in by Braque to the twenty-fifth Salon des Indépendants. He thus originated the terms "Cubism" and "Cubist" which by 1910, became current terms among journalists in general and which painters willingly adopted at the same time. "On behalf of my friends I accept the epithet "cubist" which was bestowed upon them in derision" exclaimed Apollinaire in a lecture he gave in Brussels in 1911. What is more, he gave his "aesthetic meditations", published by Figuière in 1913, the title *The Cubist Painters*. A year before the two painters Gleizes and Metzinger had handed the same publisher their work entitled *On Cubism* in which, while protesting against this inadequate label ("The notion that this word evokes, namely that of volumes, is inadequate as a definition of a movement which tends towards the integral realization of painting") made nevertheless a wholesale use of the term.

Meantime this new art had been developing in a triumphal manner. In 1909 the "Bateau-Lavoir" received a new tenant, Herbin, who forthwith became a Cubist convert, anticipating his neighbour, Juan Gris, by two years. The "Ruche" group added the sculptor, Brancusi to its numbers. And, above all, in the "Closierie des Lilas", still frequented by the Symbolists, as well as in the neighbouring flat occupied by Alexandre Mercereau in the boulevard Port-Royal, a new Cubist circle had been formed which included Gleizes, Metzinger, Le Fauconnier, Delaunay and the writer, Roger Allard. At the twenty-fifth Salon des Indépendants and the seventh Salon d'Automne, Braque⁶³, Delaunay, Le Fauconnier, Léger, Metzinger exhibited Cubist paintings which, misunderstood by the public, converted young artists who were equally stimulated by the Picasso exhibition at Ambroise Vollard's⁶⁴. Among these new, mostly short-term, recruits, we should mention the three brothers, Duchamp-Gaston (pseudonym: Jacques Villon), Raymond (pseudonym: Duchamp-Villon) and Marcel, not forgetting Marcoussis, Roger de La Fresnaye, Picabia, Reth, Valmier⁶⁵. Thus Cubism spread and became unified at one and the same time.

The years 1910 and 1911 marked in point of fact the period of maximum unity in the Cubist movement. Fernand Léger had met Braque and Picasso at the Kahnweiler gallery and for a time was going to paint in a kindred idiom (*Woman sewing, Nudes in the Forest, The Wedding*). Similarly Delaunay for a short time adopted the low-tone palette of the Cubists (*The Town*), the palette that is of Gleizes, Le Fauconnier, Metzinger, Jacques Villon with whom he had just formed a link. And the Salons of these two years — Salon des Indépendants and Salon d'Automne at any rate — showed works painted in a similar spirit such as *The Tree*, the *Woman with Phlox*,

the *Portrait of Jacques Nayral* and *The Hunt* by Gleizes, Le Fauconnier's *Portrait of Paul Castiaux*, Metzinger's *Portrait of Guillaume Apollinaire*, the *Warrior* and *Factory at la Ferté-sous-Jouarre* by Roger de La Fresnaye, adjacent canvases of the *Chess-players* by Marcel Duchamp, the *Portrait of Maurice Raynal* by Gris, that of Raymond Duchamp-Villon by his brother, Jacques, Picabia's *The City of Paris*, etc.

But there were already signs of a split in the ephemeral unity of Cubism. Braque and Picasso were moving towards a new art responsible for the former's *Mandola* and the latter's *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde* and both their versions of *Women with Mandoline*. So they established at the "Bateau-Lavoir" one form, perhaps the only true form of Cubism or at least the only orthodox Cubism to which Juan Gris, Marcoussis — Herbin, if we stretch a point — long remained true, but from which the artists who preferred the west suburb of Paris to Montmartre and met on Sundays at Jacques Villon's at Puteaux and on Mondays at Gleizes' studio at Courbevoie — La Fresnaye, Metzinger, Picabia, Léger, Delaunay, etc. were drifting away. The two groups were well aware of each other's existence. In October, 1911, Gleizes and Picasso met on private-view day at the Salon d'Automne in a bar in the Avenue d'Antin (now Avenue Franklin Roosevelt) without taking a particular fancy to each other. Gris and Léger, also Marcel Duchamp were frequent visitors to the "Bateau-Lavoir" and likewise the studios at Puteaux and Courbevoie. This applied also to Apollinaire. But the experiments carried out in the two different centres were so divergent that in 1912 and after, they led the West suburb group a long way from Cubism in the direction of schismatic and derivative forms of painting which are the subject of the next chapter.

Critics and public however did not look so closely; they merely grew more vociferously indignant as Cubism became more firmly entrenched. The Salon des Indépendants of 1911 at which Delaunay, Gleizes, Le Fauconnier, Metzinger, Archipenko, responsible for the hanging, had put their works in one and the same room with those of their comrades, Marcel Duchamp, Marie Laurencin, La Fresnaye, Picabia and Reth, the notorious Room 41 in fact, provoked reactions of which Gabriel Mourey's is typical. Writing about these painters in the *Journal* of April 20th, he deploras "novelty, *their* novelty which is a return to primitive savagery and barbarism, consisting of the repudiation and degradation of all the beauties of nature and life" He strikes a similar note in his pronouncement on the occasion of the ninth Salon d'Automne, September 30th in the same year, "I do not believe that Cubism has a future... It is the swansong of pretentious impotence and complacent ignorance." But the climax of the battle occurred in the autumn of 1912. Constructed by Duchamp-Villon in the tenth Salon d'Automne, despite the opposition of the President, Frantz Jourdain (who caused Jacques Villon to lose his membership) and thanks to the support of Desvallières and Ivanhoe Rambosson, the "Cubist House" along with the Cubist contributions aroused protests which Lampue and Jean-Louis Breton echoed at the Town Hall and the Chamber of Deputies. Only a few periodicals, *Paris-Journal* in which Salmon wrote and *l'Intransigeant* to which Apollinaire contributed, dared defend Cubism and also some reviews with a virtually private clientele such as the *Revue Indépendante*, the *Revue d'Europe et d'Amérique*, *Durandal*, the *Revue de France et des Pays français*, *Montjoie*, and after 1913, the *Soirées de Paris* which had been acquired by Serge Férat and his female cousin, Roch Grey.

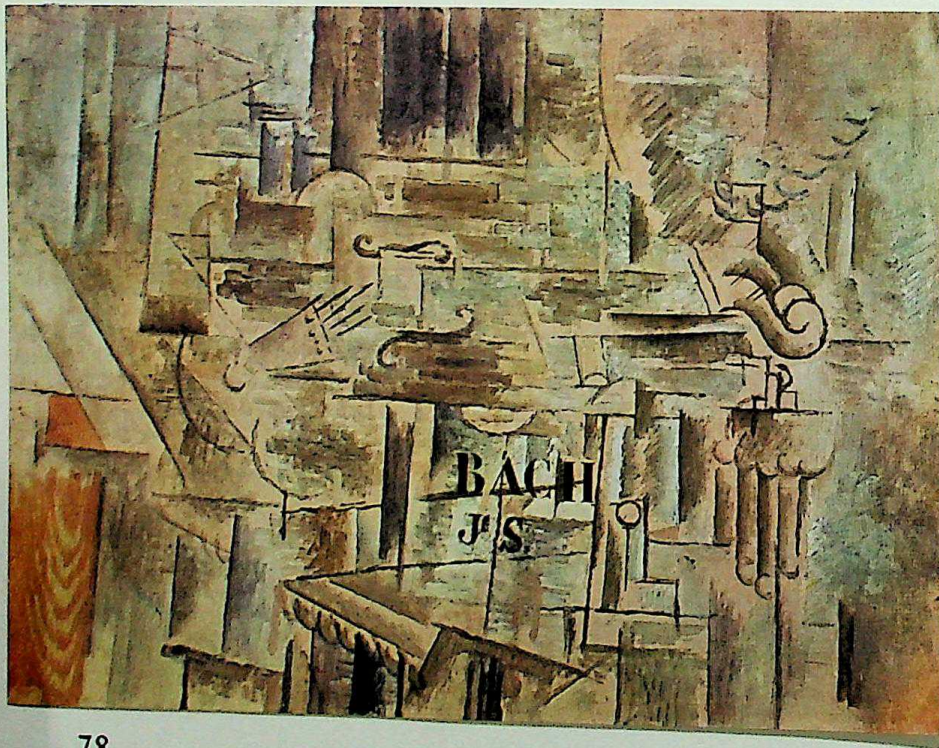


PABLO PICASSO - PORTRAIT OF WILHELM UHDE. 1910 - (0,80; 0,60)
COLLECTION MRS LEE MILLER PENROSE, LONDON

This almost unanimous hostility did not prevent Cubism from becoming known in the provinces and abroad. A Cubist exhibition was held in Rouen in 1912. The English critic, Roger Fry, arranged a show of Cubist pictures in London in 1910 and further ones in 1911 and at the Grafton Galleries in 1913. The Cercle des Indépendants of Brussels displayed some examples in May 1911. The United States held a Picasso exhibition in the same year and one at the Armory Show in 1913 which caused the same kind of scandal in New York as the 1912 Salon d'Automne had in Paris. Prague on the other hand gave a triumphal welcome to Alexandre Mercereau who went there in 1913 to present a Cubist exhibition organised by the Manès Society. Even Spain, or at least Catalonia, welcomed Cubist manifestations. In 1912 the Dalmau Gallery introduced the work of Marcel Duchamp, Gleizes, Gris, Marie Laurencin, Metzinger, Le Fauconnier and Léger to the town of Barcelona.

But it was particularly in Russia and still more in Germany that Cubism achieved such a spectacular success. As early as 1910 a travelling exhibition of French art showed Cubist works at St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev. The famous Muscovite exhibition of Valet-de-Carreau held a representative exhibition in 1912 of work by Gleizes, Léger, Le Fauconnier and Picasso who competed with the Italian Futurists for the favours of the artistic élite of the country. In 1909 and 1911, Picasso was shown in Munich where Delaunay sent a contribution to the famous

GEORGES BRAQUE - HOMAGE TO BACH, 1912 - (0,73; 0,54) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS



Blaue Reiter exhibition. An inimitable showman, Walden, at the gallery *Der Sturm* in Berlin presented between 1912 and 1914 in turn the following artists : Picasso, Braque, Herbin, Marie Laurencin, Delaunay, Reth, Léger, Gleizes, Metzinger, the Villon brothers, and the first Berlin Salon d'Automne hung works by Delaunay, Gleizes, Léger, Marcoussis, Metzinger, Picabia. In Cologne Picasso and Braque in 1912 and Picasso in 1913 were shown at the *Sonderbund* and the Rhine Salon. A Picasso exhibition took place in Dresden in 1914. But the war was about to put an end to this peaceful conquest of Germany by Cubism.

It was likewise to put an end to Cubism itself. Already abandoned by an ever-increasing number of heterodoxes, it had, after 1912, undergone an evolution which widened the gap between its two chief protagonists. If Braque remained true to the doctrines as defined during the preceding years, Picasso and Juan Gris elaborated others which failed to win the allegiance either of Reth, Metzinger, Marcoussis or the new-comer, Serge Férat. Two Cubisms then existed side by side on the eve of the 1914 war which with the call-up of Braque was to pass a death sentence on one of the movements. The new Cubism of Picasso and Juan Gris alone was destined to develop, only to be repudiated by Braque and his companions on their return from the Front. However, disseminated by the Russian Ballet, vulgarised by fashion, celebrated by an eleventh hour herald such as Jean Cocteau, still flourishing enough to attract a Maria Blanchard, Cubism about the year 1919 seemed to take on a new lease of life. This did not prevent it already belonging to the past, and this brilliant affirmation was less that of a movement than of personalities ripening into maturity. As a group affair it did not survive the 1914 mobilization which also marked the end of the partnership and intimacy of its two main champions, Picasso and Braque. By the year 1920 there were still Cubists; but no Cubism. Its life, as brief as that of Fauvism, had scarcely lasted more than seven years.

But at least Cubism lived this life with enough intensity to assume various forms in the course of these years. From 1907 to 1909 it developed chiefly under the inspiration of Cézanne and negro art, to which were added the less general or rather less vital influences of El Greco and Seurat. The landscapes that Braque painted at l'Estaque in 1908, at La Roche-Guyon and on the Normandy coast in 1909; those executed by Picasso at La Rue-aux-Bois near Amiens in 1908, then at Horta de Ebro in 1909; their figures such as the *Woman's Head* by the former (1909) and the *Nude man seated* by the latter (1908) and his *Woman in green* (1909); their still-lives such as the *Loaves* (1909) by the Spanish artist and *Musical Instruments* (1908) and *Guitar and Fruit-dish* (1909) by the Frenchman, are the most characteristic expressions of this first phase of Cubism, this negro-Cézannesque Cubism in which their anxiety to treat nature in terms of cylinders, spheres and cones, following the famous advice that Cézanne gave to Émile Bernard, led both the promoters of the movement to geometrize the forms of nature as well as those of the human body. What is the reason for this preoccupation? Doubtless to endow objects with a greater importance and therefore more presence, active presence and solidity. In order to assert their desire to construct, Braque and Picasso, one yielding to his need to react against his early Fauvism and the other to his natural avoidance of colour, repudiated violent colours, and composed with an exquisite yet forceful sensibility, heavy and pale, bright and dull paintings that have a basis of ochres and earth-colours, sometimes



JUAN GRIS - THE THREE CARDS. 1913 - (0,655; 0,46) COLLECTION HERMANN RUPF, BERNE

with touches of lavender blue, faded pinks, sometimes, — and most important — with olive-greens. A pure and severe drawing harmonizes with the economy of this discreet palette and thus there is nothing to distract the attention of the creator from those volumes with simplified planes and clear-cut ridges which stand out all the more because no chiaroscuro, no luminous atmosphere is allowed to surround or blur them. In their wish to construct the object, Picasso and Braque are no less eager to construct the picture itself which they organize in accordance with simple and clear lines of force on which a frequent use of parallels confers an authoritative addition. Unless, of course, they are out to obtain the same severity of effect by an opposition of the main axes of the composition. An impression of decision, severity, deliberate and uncompromising tension is apparent in these works — more expressive in Picasso who remains true to his early expressionism (*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*), more sober and restrained in Braque (*The Viaduct of L'Estaque*, *The Dungeon of La Roche-Guyon*).

Whereas this first Cubist phase won the allegiance of Gleizes (*The Tree*), Delaunay (*The Town*), Léger (*Woman sewing*), La Fresnaye (*The Warrior*) and, in 1911, that of Juan Gris (*Still-Life with Book*, *Still-life with Bowl*), and of Jacques Villon (*Portrait of Raymond Duchamp-Villon*), Braque and Picasso were busy working out new formulas of analytical Cubism. The former's *Mandola* (1910), his *Still-life with Jug and Violin* (1910), above all his *Girl with the Mandoline* (1910) to which Picasso is indebted for his admirable *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde*, *Violonist*, *Dressing-table*, and Gleizes for his *Woman with Phlox* (1910) are perhaps the first examples of this completely successful Cubism. The year 1911 marks the climax of this mood of Cubism as exemplified by the majority of the leaders of the movement — Braque (*The Portuguese*, *The Table*), Picasso (*Accordion Player*, *the Pigeon with green peas*), Léger (*The Wedding*), Marcel Duchamp (*The Chess-players*), Gleizes (*Portrait of Jacques Nayral*, *The Hunt*). What was the aim of all these painters?

Their devotion to the object is as lively as ever and has become even more exciting. While remaining steadfast in their attitude to precise drawing (the term "outline sketch" has been cited in this connection) and their diluted chromatism, they are no longer satisfied with a merely geometric interpretation of the form. They were anxious to be still more faithful to the form and as they had recently become aware that, on the one hand, a given form is situated in the light and, on the other, that it is not in reality as their eyes show it to be, the following problems arose: how to make it live in the atmosphere without being swallowed up in it as happened in Impressionist paintings, and how to represent it, not according to its appearance but to reality. Their reply to the first of these questions was to incorporate light in the form and embody all the tricks of light into the structural modifications. Hence a reflection becomes a plane, and, modelled by the light, the form is cut into a multiplicity of facets as a diamond is by the jeweller. Hence the polyhedron effect presented by the heads of Wilhelm Uhde, Kahnweiler, Vollard in Picasso's famous portraits of them.

As for the solution of the second problem, the Cubist found it in a series of inventions all of which emanate from their discovery that things are never as the eye perceives them to be; that the artist must show them not as he sees them but as he knows them to be; and that visual realism must be replaced by intellectual realism in accordance with Braque's principle: "The senses deform, the mind forms." The top of this tumbler which appears oval but is in fact circular, is shown as such by the Cubist painter. By representing this fruit-dish as if it were a cup, he will bring the

fruit contained in it and which is hidden by the rising sides right under our eyes. He will reveal the rising sides of furniture opposite my eyes (and which are none the less real) by unfolding the furniture as it were, and showing its different facets all in the same plane, the picture plane. Finally, and above, all, he systematizes a hint given by Cézanne, and, for the representation of various objects which come into his picture, chooses the angle at which they appear least distorted to the eye; hence in his admirable *Still-life with Ace of Clubs* of the Musée d'Art Moderne (1913), Braque has looked at the black surface of the table that he has introduced into his composition from above in order not to distort it by perspective and reveal it in all its entirety from this angle of vision. To see the table-drawer, on the other hand, Braque has had to place himself opposite to it and slightly below the table he is looking at. This therefore is the angle from which he paints and this is the way he presents the objects to us — a plunging view of the cards placed on the table, horizontal for the receptacles that are on it. Braque is continually moving round in order to choose a suitable view-point. Perhaps the newly-invented cinema had given the Cubists some important hints.

But these procedures adopted with the intention of producing truth, result in the creation of an image of reality highly likely to disconcert the spectator. Realistic in intention, hyper-realistic in the means they employed, the Cubists — in spite of themselves — attained an unrealistic result which they refused, however, to acknowledge as such. Thus, with the object of returning to reality — and here it is Braque who blazed the trail — they did their best to imitate the exterior aspect of things by introducing certain well-known house-painters' techniques into easel-paintings. Now they would imitate wood grain, marbling or the wickerwork of a chair, now a nail, a piece of paper... In other paintings they would copy printers' type. And from these experiments, spread over the years 1911 to 1913, resulted the introduction in 1913 of actual scraps of printed paper into the pictorial matter of the picture. Thus for the first time since the Middle Ages which had admitted plaster, stucco and gold-leaf alongside painting pigments, the picture is no longer solely constituted by the latter. And shortly afterwards, at the end of 1913, we have Braque, Picasso and Gris, soon to be followed by Laurens, composing works entirely made up of scraps of paper fitted together and completed by finishing touches of drawing, gouache or paint. A new genre therefore makes its appearance, namely "collage", which immediately resulted in such masterpieces as Braque's *Bach Aria* or Picasso's *Student with Pipe*.

But over and above this paradoxical realism the Cubists of 1911 were animated by other preoccupations. If they introduced fake letters into their paintings, were they not realizing their decorative capacity from the example of their mediaeval masters? And, similarly, what a convenient pretext for rejecting perspective and bringing real three-dimensional objects to life in terms of the picture's two this multiplying of the view-point presented! Further means were contrived by these artists to enable them to achieve a decorative quality. Why, for instance, in his exemplary *Still-life with Ace of Clubs* in the Musée d'Art Moderne, did Braque rob the table of the bunch of grapes and the plum which would normally repose there and place them in the upper portion of his composition? Doubtless to relieve the centre which would otherwise have been overloaded and to fill the top which was threatened

by emptiness. This basic principle that underlies any art aiming at decoration, the principle which I would call that of the equal distribution of furniture over the surface, is applied here by Braque as in so many other paintings of his where he is on common ground with Picasso.

But the notion of decoration was taboo among the Cubists. They feared and despised it, or at any rate, they intended to aim at something more. Thus, possibly with the example of the Nabis in mind, they deliberately aimed at producing a difficulty of "reading" which they associated with the creation of poetry and human significance. "Too much clarity is unfitting... The proprieties demand a certain element of mystery," as Gleizes, the spokesman of his friends, charmingly put it, and not content to arrive at this esoteric philosophy by the application of the processes as defined above, they used further ones in a similar spirit. One of their favourite ones was to replace the description of an object by suggestion, a hint that was just enough to allow us the pleasure of guessing at the rest. Thus in the *Still-life with Ace of Clubs* by Braque the champagne glass which occupies the centre of the composition is reduced on its right side and on the left half of its foot, and it is left to us as spectators to reconstitute this piece of glass from the elements provided. Like Mallarmé in poetry, the Cubist painter aims at a discretion, like oddness of appearance, for example, which favours the birth of poetry.

Complex by reason of its subtlety, very worthy of Braque, its promoter doubtless and its most gifted representative, this analytical Cubism was possibly too refined for the logical mind of Gris and Picasso's impulsive temperament. Thus the two Spaniards in 1913 elaborated a new, simplified, perhaps over-simple form, Synthetic Cubism. A plague on Nature! You start with the picture. You dissect it into simple, severe self-evident (geometric) figures which you proceed to transform into objects, even — though rarely — into personages. "From a cylinder I make a bottle", professed the puritan of Cubism whose point of view is, as you see, abstract. In radical opposition then to the Cézannesque Pre-Cubism which transformed the bottle into the cylinder, synthetic Cubism incorporates the geometric structure into concrete forms; but the aim — and this is where it is opposed to the realizations of analytical Cubism — is to achieve the simple arrogance familiar to Pre-Cubism. Light and atmosphere are banished. The objects are silhouetted, arrogant and implacable, in a rigorous space, and through its very poverty, this final phase of Cubism attains to a grandeur that is perhaps more Spanish than French and reminiscent less of Seurat, Cézanne, Chardin and Poussin than of Zurbaran and El Greco.

Is this tantamount to saying that Cubism does not present unity in its diversity? Far from it. Whatever form it has in fact assumed and whatever version each of its champions gave it, it constitutes on the one hand a reaction against Impressionism, Fauvism and the first phase of Expressionism and, at the same time a decisive step in the direction of the fundamentally anti-realistic nature of contemporary painting.

Technically what defined it in 1907, as in 1911 or 1913, was its rejection of Fauve colour and this in some ways was only the logical outcome of Impressionist chromatism. Apart from certain pictures painted by Juan Gris and Picasso between 1913 and 1914, the Cubist work exemplifies a deliberately neutral and sober palette. Earth-colours, ochres, greys form, with black and white, its most usual harmonies,



GEORGES BRAQUE - THE PINK TABLECLOTH. 1933 - (0,97; 1,30) WALTER P. CHRYSLER JR, COLLECTION, NEW YORK

which, discreet though they are, are often no less exquisite for that, especially when they emanate from the refined hands of Braque. In its subordinate role these colours are incorporated into paint, sparingly applied by the artist in what he would claim to be an impersonal manner. "Humbly painted, angular, grey, ascetic," according to Gleizes and Metzinger, the Cubists avoid in these works what the Fauves had aimed at in theirs, with as much care as they seek out what the Fauves had avoided and, in particular, drawing. Clear, pure, the line is emphasized as clearly as form, to which light, atmosphere and movement are all sacrificed. "A picture," decides Apollinaire, "is a silent and motionless manifestation" in which nothing is allowed to shift the lines or upset the calm affirmation of the construction. One can realize then without difficulty how, carried away by this enthusiasm, Braque and Picasso came to neglect landscape and figure and gave themselves up more and more, almost exclusively between 1912 to 1914, to still-life which was favoured likewise at that time by Gris, Marcoussis, Reth and Serge Férat.

If the movement cannot claim a place in the creative work of Cubism proper, it is because it is an isolated phenomenon and because, as opposed to Cubism, it aims



GEORGES BRAQUE - CANEPHORUS. 1926 - (1,60; 0,73)
CHESTER DALE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

at the expression of the permanent⁶⁷, the essential, in a word, the expression of the hidden reality of things. Realist, but if I may express it thus realist in *depth*, Cubism stresses the object, contrary to its predecessors which had built up an entirely subjective conception of painting. Hence their taboo on interpreting exterior reality. "To distort nature under the pretext of demonstrating one's sensibility, is to attribute a strange destructive mission to this sensibility" wrote Gleizes in his book *Of Cubism and the Means of Understanding it* in 1920. In it he also stresses the Cubist insistence on eliminating the individual interpretation and allowing expression neither to sensation nor sentiment but instead, to the more anonymous intelligence. "Cubist pictures," he said, "no longer live on anarchic sensibility... they no longer have the appearance of individualist productions. The superficial, sensual outer-cover is dominated by the internal structure which has the same laws for everybody." An art of the intellect ("Our young painters are offering us works which are more cerebral than sensual", asserts Apollinaire, speaking of his Cubist friends) and an art, moreover, which aims at being depersonalized, objective, turned towards the non-self, is thus opposed to the stand taken by the Fauves and first Expressionists.

There was, however, little anger that it would revert to that photographic and depersonalized realism against which all independent artists had fought since Impressionism. Intellectual though it was, that was no reason why it should cut out the artist's individual interpretation, and—the corollary—the assertion of his personality. "As many versions of an object as there are eyes to contemplate it," wrote Gleizes and Metzinger, who shared Apollinaire's conviction that individual and subjective intelligence should exploit this reality. "Painters who observe nature are no longer imitating it," asserted the author of the *Cubist Painters*, agreeing with another of their friends, Maurice Raynal, who said, "What need is there to define objects that our eyes define every day and to perpetuate the work of the dictionaries?"

The Cubist picture was not therefore imitative, and the traditional *phuséōs mimesis* is rejected by the Cubists and their associates with an even greater horror than the Fauves, Expressionists and Nabis. "Too many painters still worship plants, stones, water or man... it is time *we* were the masters of these elements... Every divinity creates in its own image; that is the way with painters — only photographers turn out reproductions of nature..." What a profession of superior reality and what a confirmation that artists should prefer other aims to copying the exterior world are these, among many other analogous sayings of Apollinaire!

But what aims? The expression of their personality, doubtless, their creative power. "The painter should above all offer himself the spectacle of his divinity," writes this same exegetist of Cubism; but also, and this especially, the conception of pure painting as it emerges from another of these glorious statements, "The plastic virtues, purity, unity, truth, keep nature laid low at their feet." The picture then must be a structure of lines, colours and forms, which can achieve its ends only by being such and because it is such, can obey only its own laws. Apollinaire, the mouthpiece of his friends, expatiates at length on the first of these ideas. "If the aim of painting is, as it used to be, the pleasure of the eye, we ask the art-lover to seek in it a pleasure other than that which the spectacle of natural phenomena can equally well provide." And after supplying innumerable examples, he refers to music. The music-lover, listening to a concert "experiences a different kind of pleasure from that which he feels on hearing natural sounds." Similarly the new painting "which will be related to painting, as hitherto regarded", as music is to literature..., pure

painting, as music is pure literature..., not an art of imitation but an art of conception which has the power to become creation; Cubist painting, that is, is to replace the principle of imitation by those which are imposed on it by the essential character of painting. "The science of drawing consists in setting up relationships between curves and straight lines... what the curve is to the straight line, the cool tone is to the warm. Painting is the art of animating a plane surface. The plane surface is a two-dimensional world. It has its own truth within these two dimensions. To claim to invest it with a third, is to wish to distort its very nature." These are propositions which Gleizes, speaking for his fellow-artists, makes, reminding them of the fundamental requirements of painting to which all the Cubists endeavoured to remain true. But in so doing, they completed the process of abandoning the traditional formulas which the realist and imitative conception of painting had elaborated. Thus perspective, modelling, chiaroscuro, respect for anatomy are eliminated from their universe which is built upon other foundations, respect for the picture-plane, equal distribution of light, equal distribution of forms over the surface, expressive or plastic interpretation, incorporation of reality in the picture etc. "It is not necessary that painting should evoke the memory of a water-jug, guitar, glass but of a series of harmonious relationships in an organism peculiar to the actual means of the picture". By what clearer profession of faith than this of Gleizes and Metzinger, can one conclude this analysis of Cubism which is also its balance-sheet, or at any rate, part of its balance-sheet?

For Cubism as it evolved from 1907 to 1914 is not only concerned with pure painting and the unreality we have described but also a movement whose fertilizing action left its mark in many domains including, of course, painting in particular. Abandoned by many artists (who were no less indebted to it for the new direction of their work) it exercised a decisive influence on the paintings of Braque and Picasso, not forgetting those of Juan Gris, too soon, alas, cut short by his premature death.

There is no expression of Cubism more characteristic, complete, harmonious than the art of Braque in its later efflorescence. Back from the war in 1915, not completely recovered until 1917 when he began painting again, he underwent for a brief time the influence of the new Cubism, as Picasso had set its main lines from the year 1914 (*Guitarist*, 1917) and then quickly took hold of himself and worked out a new key of a wholly personal cubism in his *Café-Bar* of 1919. Shortly afterwards he moved towards an idiom that enabled him to cope with a certain kind of realism and enjoyed alternating between noble figures of women (*Nude with Basket of Grapes*, 1924 *Cane-phorus*, 1926) and still-lives, abundant and luxurious in their calculated creation (*The Fireplace*, 1922; *The Marble Table*, 1925; *The Black Rose*, 1927; *The Round Table*, 1929). Some landscapes of the Normandy coast close this manner about 1932. In his succeeding style we notice a development towards a bolder interpretation of nature which is less defined perhaps in his still-lives, peopled with fewer objects (*The Pink Tablecloth*, 1933; *The Yellow Table-Cloth*, 1935) than in his recumbent nudes and his figure compositions (*The Woman Painter*, 1936; *The Painter and his Model*, 1939). The drawing is more defined. The short, hard, nervous line like a musical phrase which does not end, serves both to define the forms and weave an arabesque rich in decorative power through the composition. The lighter palette of a higher key is loaded with reds, pinks, mauves, violets, occasional yellows which the brush disposes with a greater breadth and freedom. The form, flatter, is the more successfully

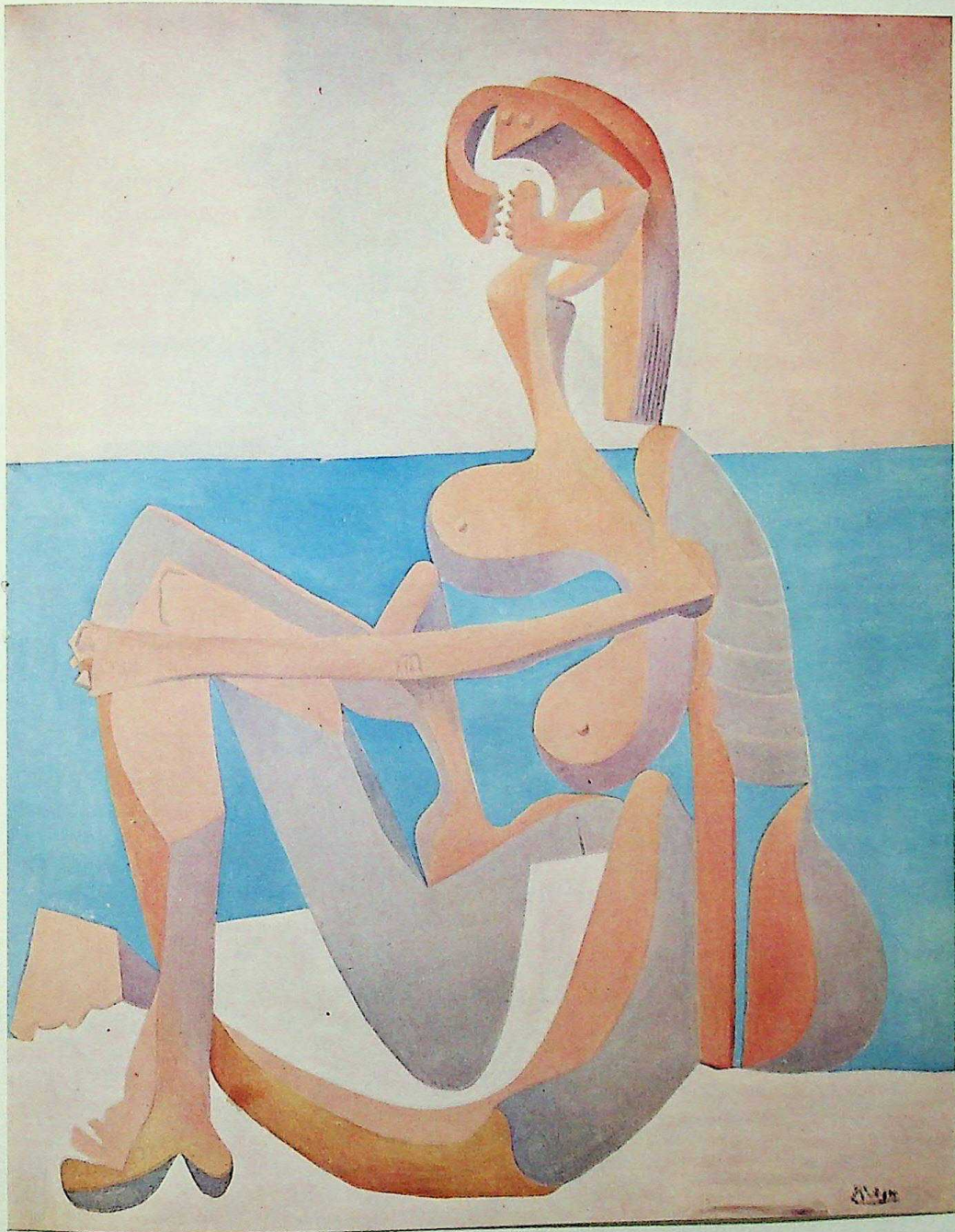
integrated in that interior boundaries of colour allow us to re-constitute the volume without difficulty. The picture formats increase in accordance with the size of the double-faceted figures which the artist sometimes gives us (*The Duet*, 1937). Evidence of the refinement and power is observable in these numerous and rhythmic canvases, full of bold but well-balanced designs. True to this movement of ebb and flow which is responsible for these transpositions of alternating restraint and audacity, Braque follows up this less transposed manner (*The Red Table*, 1942; *The Stove*, 1943; *The Black Salon*, *The Sunflowers*, 1946) with a more unrepresentational one, showing a predilection for studio-interiors and birds. The decoration he executed for a room in the Louvre (1952) is one of the outstanding examples. A fresh return to appearances, marked this time by an inclination towards a slightly indiscreet virtuosity, not to say indolent facility; then a new movement towards the unrealistic (*On the Wing*, 1955) in which a great deal of invention is hidden under a great deal of taste. Thus in this career during which Braque, faithful to the Cubism of his youth, brought all the fruits to maturity, there is nothing that reminds us of the varied experiments of a Matisse or Picasso's many rapid *volle-face*.

The unity of Braque's production is built up from the union of contraries — boldness and restraint; sense of the picture's own life and of the objects in the picture; conscious intention and naturalness; courage and elegance, the elegance of a drawing that is made up of curves and counter-curves; colour (now a golden brown camaïeu, now a polyphony of pure colours) of a well-prepared, varied, abundant, yet light, definite, discreet *matière*, of rhythms, subtlety proportioned dimensions, Attic exactitude — in a word, constructions.

And in this art Braque is inspired by his love for inanimate objects. He experiences the humble objects of our everyday life, with such profundity that, like Chardin and despite a similar superficial objectivity, he succeeds in expressing their secret life endowing them even with a religious significance. A guitar, a jug, a tobacco-jar suffice to enable him to express the world's ineffable mystery.

Nor is this the result of a chance element. It is a highly conscious art, fully aware of what resources must be tapped to achieve a given end. Braque's knowledge is at the service of a lucidity that calculates its effects, careful that the blows it strikes shall be well-placed rather than heavy. In the same spirit he is at pains to conceal the amount of work and skill involved in the attainment of an apparently effortless result. A complete absence of any aggressive attack. His originality depends on tradition and aims at reaching a perfection so flawless as to appear inevitable. Great enough, too, to strive not to appear so, Braque's art is the supreme flower of ancient French culture which, even in its Cubist rejuvenescence, remains courteous, superior and noble.

The contrast then between Braque and Picasso is complete. Coming to Cubism from Expressionism, the Spanish artist was possibly more himself in the latter than the former, in which his abundant masterpieces of 1910 to 1913^{es} if they count among his most flawless works are not perhaps his most individual productions. Are not the sense of balance, rhythm, purity observable in them the effect on his essentially baroque and expressionist nature of the impact of French classicism which his genius so perfectly assimilates (what indeed is it incapable of assimilating!) but at the cost perhaps of a slight loss of individuality! But the latter quickly reacted and reas-



PABLO PICASSO - WOMAN SEATED BY THE SEASHORE. 1929 - (1,62; 1,30)
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MRS SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND), NEW YORK





PABLO PICASSO - GUERNICA 1937 - (3,37; 8,25)
IN THE POSSESSION OF THE ARTIST

serted itself — and how authoritatively! — in the next stage of Cubism (*The Balcony*, 1919; *The Table*, 1920; *The Dog and the Cock*, 1921; both versions of the *Three Musicians*, 1921) which he was practising after “synthetic” Cubism, from 1916 to 1921, concurrently with other manners, influenced on the one hand by Ingres (1915) on the other by Russian Ballet (1917) and thirdly by Goya (1923 and lastly by the art or shall we say “arts” of antiquity (1920-1924), at one time that of ancient Greece, another that of Alexandria. We are conscious of a kind of synthesis between these various experiments in canvases in which Alfred H. Barr Jr. saw the manifestation of a curvilinear Cubism (*The Red Carpet*, 1924; *The Studio at Juan-les-Pins*, 1925) and which are a kind of farewell on the part of the artist to a Cubism to which he had given so many varied expressions.

He then falls under the influence of Surrealism, the more profoundly in that it contains elements that satisfy both his innate *Angst* and his taste for the monstrous. But if he makes use of Surrealism, he disdains the literary and academic language exploited by a Salvador Dali and brings to bear the acquisition of all his pictorial and sculptural discoveries on it and creates works which are more disturbing for being so plastically impressive. Whether it is a question of fantastic forms, kinds of totems with rotundities bristling with spikes (1928), skeleton-women in interior settings or by the seashore (1929), people whose mirrors repeat the forms with variations (1932); whether colour is almost absent or, on the contrary, emulating Matisse, violent; whether the construction is sculptural or flat drawing dominates — throughout all these series, these successive *volte-face*, it is always Surrealist inspiration that fertilizes Picasso's art, excites his invention and spurs him on in his creation of a world of monsters and phantoms, nightmares so haunting that one cannot escape their spell (1926-1935).

Then a kind of interpenetration operates between the old form or rather old forms of Picasso's Cubism and his recent phases of Surrealism. Since 1936 it is to this kind of Cubist-surrealist Expressionism that the painter has remained faithful, but this fidelity has not prevented him from working on a diversity of themes and executing many experiments. For a time he may appear to abandon this vein and exploit others, frolic in the pastoral landscape of Theocritus for example. But in point of fact we soon see him return to his intense and feverish idiom as bursting with assertions as with interrogations, as full of confidence in its plastic expression as of anguish in its subject matter, an idiom in which the horror of *Guernica* (1937) has its counterpart, almost twenty years later, in *War* (1952) a subject in which he seemed more at home in painting than in *Peace*, in a secularized chapel at Vallauris.

Unvarying yet various, even contradictory, uneven, enjoying the fact, how can we define Picasso? First and foremost by his prolific output and his exceptional creative power. Not only a painter but also engraver, sculptor, ceramist, he has produced a superabundance of works in all these techniques with a staggering rapidity, expressing himself in any material with any tool at hand and producing amazing results.

Next, by his exceptional capacity for assimilation. Immensely curious, not allowing anything to do with any art to escape him, however foreign or ancient, fully aware of all the discoveries even of his obscure contemporaries, he plagiarises one and all, pre-history, Surrealists, Doric art and Toulouse-Lautrec, Polynesian masks and Henri Hayden, Matisse and Duchamp-Villon and Odilon Redon, negro sculpture and Attic ceramics, Italian Renaissance and the French nineteenth century, Ingres and

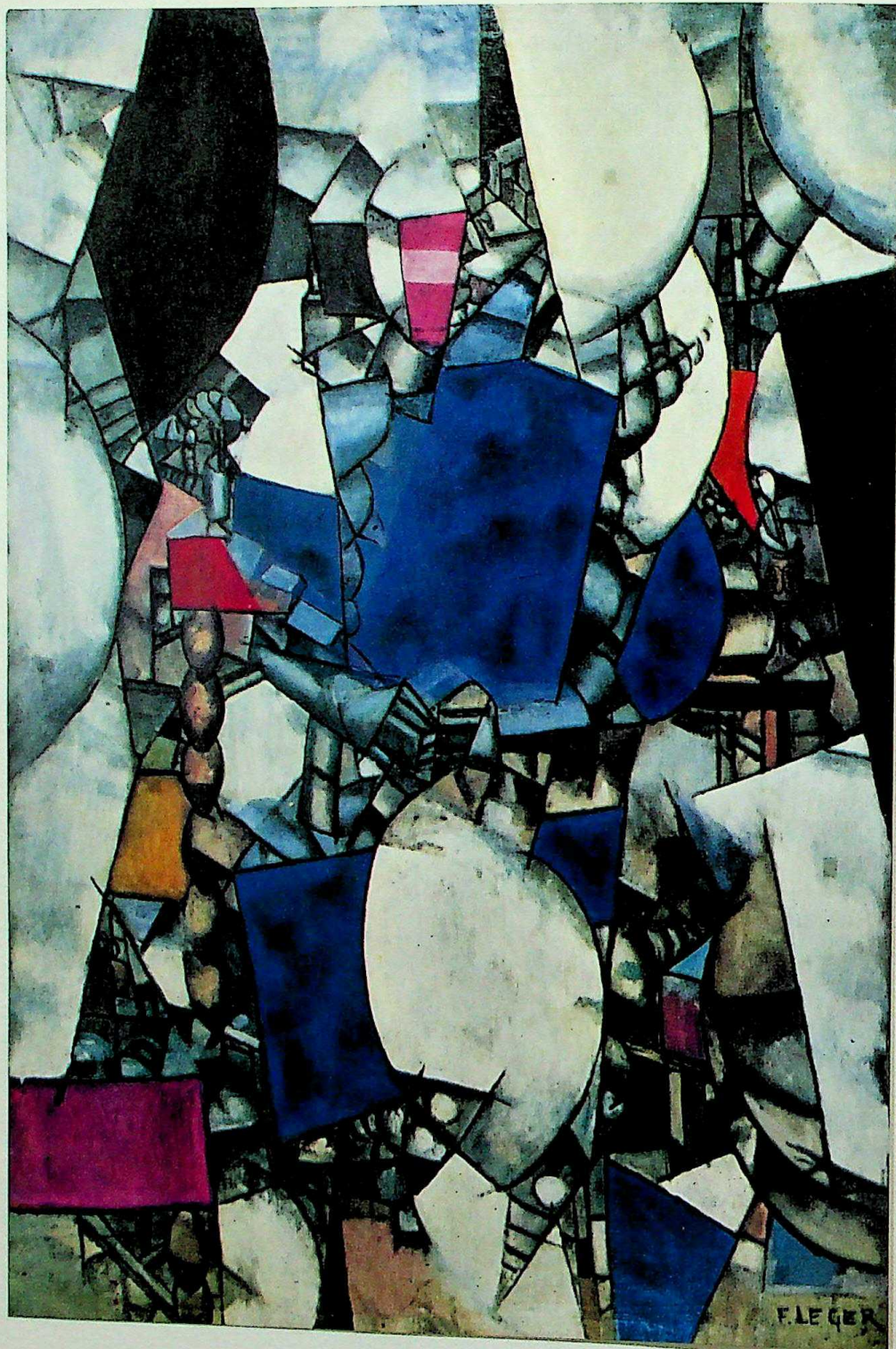
El Greco; but his results never fail to demonstrate the merits of what Goethe called "the science of justified plagiarism" when he reduces all these borrowings in his creative melting-pot and makes them into Picasso, even when he copies the *Demoiselles des Bords de la Seine* or *The Women of Algiers*.

Why these references to other artists? Does his imagination require a spring-board before it can take off? Far from it. No art is more directly rooted in an individual daily experienced life than his. Diametrically opposed to abstract art, always representational, "lived", his painting is really his private diary in which he talks to us in turn about his worries, his children, his political opinions, even his various holidays (though he is not a landscape painter), his tastes and his pleasures, his sorrows, what he despises and, above all, what he hates.

Expressionist from this point of view, he is likewise expressionist in his striving after effect at any price — whether he obtains it by over-crowding or economy — for he is baroque too, baroque like El Greco, Valdes Leal, Goya, Gaudi, Lope de Vega, Gongora, Calderon. He has an innate desire for the excessive, finds satisfaction in the extravagant, practises a perpetual *superación*, if only with regard to himself. His arts belongs to violence, frozen tension, exaggeration, and he revels in it. The line bites into the support, torments the form, rouses us, stings us up. The form recreated with feverish invention is animated by wild, quivering, jerky rhythms. The composition is concentrated; never calm or discreet; even his restraint issues a challenge.

But Picasso has never sacrificed the plastic element to this delirious Expressionism. Often a refined colourist when he restricts himself to the camaïeu of neutral tones, sometimes commonplace and heavy when he aims at brilliance of colour, powerful without fail, he is always a draughtsman of unequalled and incomparable authority who through his mastery of drawing succeeds in imposing his visions and caprices — which in this way become incontestable — upon us. Plastic discipline is perhaps the only discipline this anarchist has accepted, feeling doubtless with the exceptional intelligence and lucidity of his pride and individualism that it was through it that he would realize himself, make his mark and create.

Is he a genius? Without a shadow of doubt, and one of the least disputed geniuses of the present time, despite his jokes and his mannerisms, his vanities and his acts of defiance; a genius who has produced a corpus of work that is too strange to set a fashion and stimulate other artists — though his work has been pillaged by hundreds of imitators. The roads which he has opened up do not perhaps lead anywhere. But that is not the main point, which is that his production and personality exist, provide something to react to. Without Mephistopheles Faust would not have been Faust. What would the art of yesterday, today and—who knows—even tomorrow, be without Picasso?



FERNAND LÉGER - THE WOMAN IN BLUE. 1912 - (1,93; 1,30) KUNSTMUSEUM, BASEL

THE GOLDEN SECTION

CUBISM had not yet won the acceptance of the public, critics or even the majority of artists when, even before the great battles of 1912, several of its champions tired of it, denounced its insufficiencies and got caught up in different problems. Their chief rendez-vous was the studio Jacques Villon shared with his brother, the sculptor, Raymond Duchamp-Villon at 7, rue Lemaître, in Puteaux, where on Sundays the two artists received Gleizes, Metzinger, Léger, La Fresnaye, Picabia, not forgetting their brother, Marcel Duchamp nor their neighbour, Kupka. Ideas and pictures were compared and from these discussions criticism of Cubism as it was being practised by Braque and Picasso gradually emerged. They deplored that movement's increasing predilection for still-life and — corollary to this — its disdain for subjects borrowed from everyday life which they considered capable of being treated in an entirely unanecdotal and purely pictorial manner; they deplored the casual way this kind of Cubism had decided to ignore movement, the "snap-shot" view, the feeling of growth, the dynamism of life. Against its promoters they appealed to Cézanne who was the god at Puteaux even more than at Montmartre⁶⁹. They admired the rich complexity of his art and wanted above all to focus everybody's eyes on the lessons in construction, rhythm and composition which his work offered and which they compared with Seurat's. Examining the *Dimanche à la Grande Jatte*, they discovered that his harmony, the style by virtue of which its author had avoided realism and literature, lay in the application of the principle of the intervals on a sounding-board that he had discovered, namely the law of "divine proportions" whose potentialities, as La Fresnaye recalled, had been extolled by his professor at the Académie Ranson, Sérusier. In this way an art very different from Braque's and Picasso's Cubism was sketched out. It was more conservative in one direction, more of an innovation in another, more faithful on the one hand to Cézannesque pre-Cubism, abandoned by the artists of the "Bateau-Lavoir" and more inclined on the other, towards pure, even abstract painting. And works were already materializing which embodied these new ambitions — La Fresnaye's *Artillery*, for example, inspired by his reading of the *Tête d'Or*, the *Nude descending the Staircase* painted by Marcel Duchamp before the opening of the 1912 Salon des Indépendants, in which Le Fauconnier is said to have refused to hang them.

The fixing of this order of events settles a problem which the art-historian is bound to consider, namely, the relation between these artists and the Italian Futurists. It is by no means certain that the painters with whom we are here concerned paid much attention to the Manifesto which Marinetti published in the issue of *Figaro* dated 20th February 1909⁷⁰. As it dealt with literature, it could lay very little claim to their attention. It would doubtless have been a different story in the case of the manifesto — had they known about it — which was distributed on 3rd March 1910 at the Teatro Chiarella at Turin. But it is doubtful whether they read it or knew anything about Boccioni's and Severini's experiments before the Futurist Exhibition organized in Paris at Bernheim's gallery in February, 1912⁷¹. By then *Artillery* had

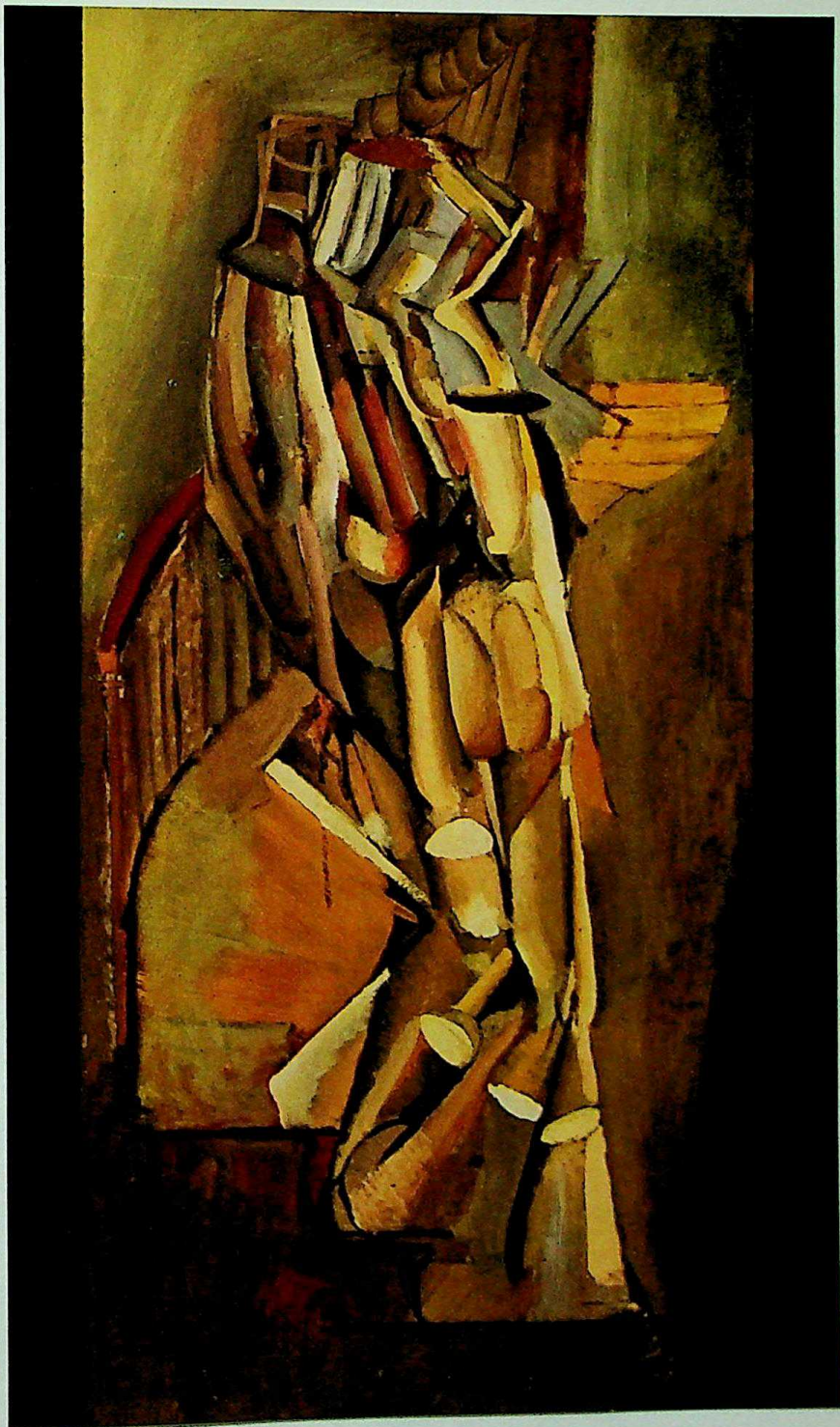
already been painted and *Nude descending the Staircase* was on the stocks. There is therefore no question of imitation of the Futurists by the painters we are considering, merely of analogy between them, parallel solutions to problems which were, so to speak, in the air. The same feeling of the dynamism of modern life, the same interest in the plastic notation of movement resulted in kindred works from both to which the cinema also possibly contributed. This explains the relationship between Marcel Duchamp's "chrono-photography" and his *Nude descending the Staircase* and Balla's *Dog out for a Walk*.

The hostility which Le Fauconnier had apparently shown towards Duchamp's picture induced the latter to advocate the launching of a new Salon in which the plan was to counteract "the encroaching influence of the already classified Cubist formula". It was together with Picabia and Apollinaire — always eager by temperament as well as on principle for something new and non-conformist — that Marcel Duchamp defined it during the summer of 1912 which he spent with them in the Upper Jura. On their return to Paris they communicated their plans to their Puteaux friends with whom they founded the dinners of the "Passy artists". In September, the first of these repasts was held in the rue Raynouard at the house formerly inhabited by Balzac, and among those present, apart from poets like Apollinaire and Roger Allard, were painters and sculptors, including Villon, and Duchamp-Villon, Gleizes and Metzinger, La Fresnaye, Léger, Picabia and Marie Laurencin whose contributions were to hang a month later side by side under the aegis of a new Salon. This was opened on 10th October 1912 in the hall of a furnisher in the rue La Boétie and displayed the work of thirty participants, including, as well as the sculptors Archipenko and Duchamp-Villon, the painters Gleizes, La Fresnaye, Marie Laurencin, Léger, Lhote, Metzinger, Picabia, Villon⁷². During the twenty days (10th to 30th October) it remained open, lectures were delivered by Apollinaire, Maurice Raynal and René Blum on the 11th, 18th and 25th October respectively and a review appeared, the first and only number of which provided an account from the pen of Maurice Raynal. Both review and Salon, under the sponsorship of Jacques Villon, were inspired by a belief in the Golden Section. A great admirer of Leonardo da Vinci, Villon had not only discovered in his writings the famous theory of the Pyramids⁷³ but had also found in a book he had illustrated, Luca Pacioli's *Proporzione divina* (Venice 1509) the notion and the actual term "Golden Section" in which he was successful in rousing his friends' interest.

As harshly treated by the critics and public as orthodox Cubism had been (Vauxcelles did not pull his punches in *Gil Blas*) the art idiom⁷⁴ exhibited at the Salon of the Golden Section did not greatly differ from it. It certainly shared the same predilection for form and composition but, on the one hand, it pushed its experiments still further and on the other, undertook new ones. More than Picasso and Braque even, the members of the new Salon, at any rate those animated by the genuine spirit, were possessed by a passion for order and intelligibility. They sought therefore to provide their constructions and compositions with a mathematical substructure, basing the relationships they established between the elements in their pictures on numbers, and, let us add, a highly refined sensibility. Hence the harmony of their canvases which are veritable fugues with a stern rhythm underlying a limpid suppleness.

But this rhythm does not animate the static compositions of lines and forms which Braque, Juan Gris and Picasso delight in, but forms in motion, "pointing"

MARCEL DUCHAMP - NUDE
DESCENDING THE STAIRCASE.
1911 - (0,96; 0,59) MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART, PHILADELPHIA



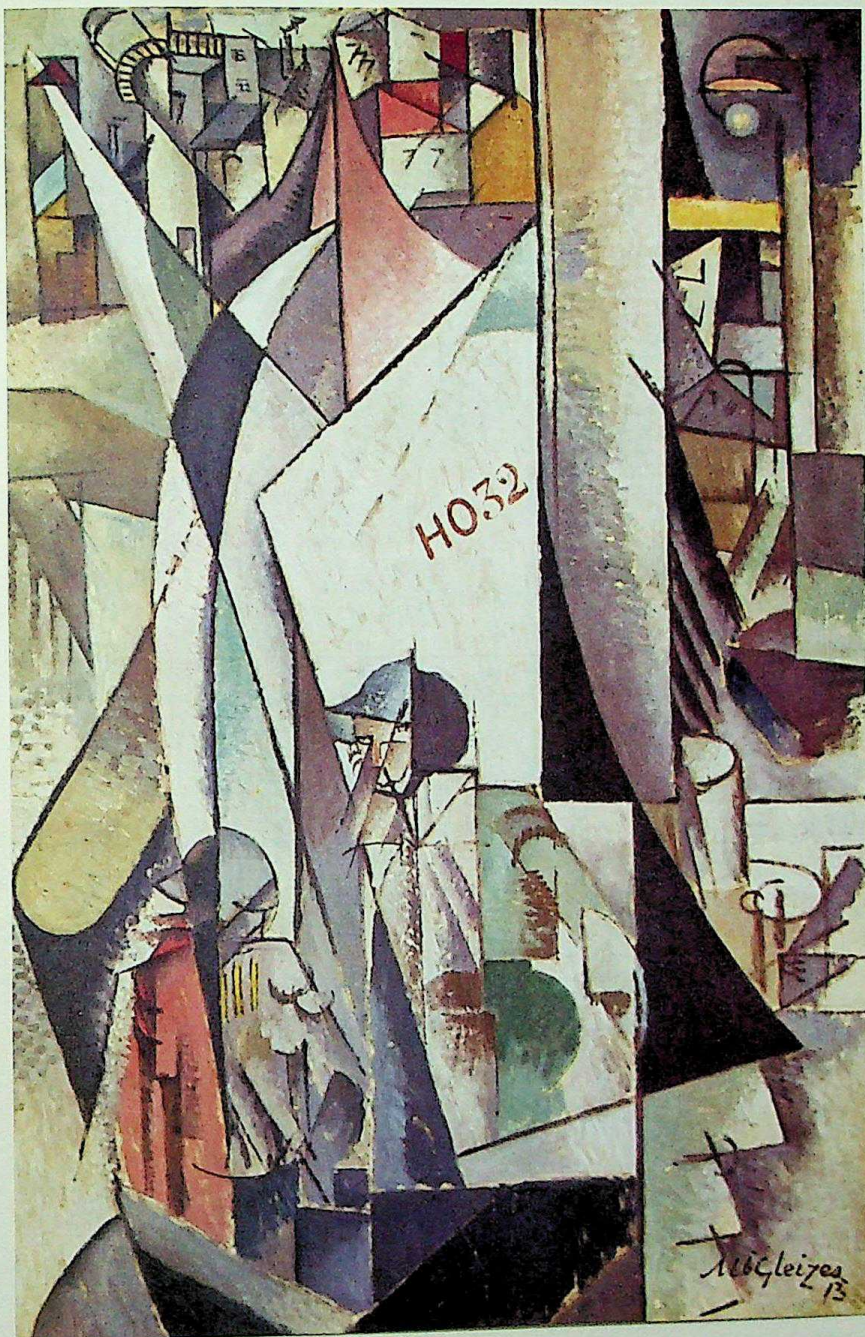
this movement, making it thereby more perceptible, more evident, more easily read⁷⁵. Before long, to this first difference which the desire to translate movement established between Cubism and the cult of the Golden Section was added a second — preoccupation with colour.

The *Nude descending the Staircase* by Marcel Duchamp, La Fresnaye's *Artillery*, his *Bathers*, his admirable *Card-players* shown in the 1912 Salon d'Automne, the dynamic *Procession in Seville* of Picabia, Gleizes' *Harbour* with its burnt-bread harmonies, are so many proofs that in that year the Puteaux painters had not yet given themselves up to the experiments in colour which they were to undertake later and to which Delaunay was already giving himself up with enthusiasm but which, for the time being, seemed to attract Villon — if intermittently (*The Man with the Newspaper*) and more definitely Fernand Léger, whose masterpiece of the 1912 Salon d'Automne, *The Woman in blue*, although, as its title suggests, more coloured than the paintings of Braque and Picasso done at that period, is none the less pitched in a discreet key; the uncompromising tones of the dress being damped down by the surrounding whites, greys and blacks.

But by the following year the transformation was complete — the painters of the Golden Section had discovered colour which they associated with movement and arranged, if I may so express it, in rhythmic phrases. But they did not embrace it without some hesitation, and if the *Football Players* that Gleizes exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants are dressed in strong colours, the artist reverts to minor tones in his *Portrait of the publisher Figuière*, hung in the Salon d'Automne, his *Fishing-Boats*, his *Windmill*, in all of which he remains true to the warm, subdued colour of the *Commercial Harbour*. Others, in contrast, moved towards colour at a steadier pace. Clear and light in Villon's *Marching Soldiers* and La Fresnaye's *Woman in the Clouds*, a few months later, it became much stronger in the *Seated Woman* by the former and the celebrated *Conquest of the Air* by the latter, similarly in André Lhote's composition, *Ports of Call* and Metzinger's *Blue Bird*. But the man who made the most definite concessions to it is Léger who even more than in his masterly *Level-Crossing* (1912) now took a delight in associating blues with yellows, reds with greens which, with the help of dead areas of white or grey and some use of blacks, he contrives to harmonize with perfect skill and taste.

Why this return to light colour in 1913 (for here it is more a question of clear than intense colour) ostracised by the orthodox Cubists, which in 1914 led to the reinstatement of strong and deep colours with brilliant sonorities (Gleizes' *Portrait of Stravinsky*)? The reason varies with individuals. For Léger it was doubtless in order to give his paintings more dynamism. Whether in still-lives, landscapes, houses with brick-red roofs, emerald green trees assailing a royal-blue belfry, interiors, *The Staircase*, for example of 1913, or more frequently still, abstract compositions which he entitled *Variations* or *Contrasted Forms*, the colour is there to reinforce the opposition of the volumes, "point" their movement still more which is already being rendered more evident, intense, punctuated like that of a machine, by their reduction to rigorously geometric solids. A powerful pulsation, the heavy panning of a locomotive thus rises from these paintings without any sacrifice in refinement of colour or *matière* which perfectly correspond to their insistent rhythm.

But it was quite different for La Fresnaye who at the same time as he lost interest in the expression of movement — as exemplified in *Artillery* painted in 1911 — became fascinated by colour, and juxtaposed the purest sky-blues, lightest reds,



ALBERT GLEIZES - FISHING BOATS. 1913 - (1,11; 1,65) MOELLER GALLERY, COLOGNE

tawny yellows, fresh greens with creamy whites, peach-blacks, silver greys, in still-lives and compositions in which the elements are motionless (described as *still-lives with Watering-can, T-square, Bottle of turpentine, with Books and Playing-cards the Conquest of the Air; Man seated; the 14th July*). Colour for him, as for Cézanne, is the meeting-place of local colour and tone-light, form and atmosphere, and he wanted to enrich Cubism — as Seurat had enriched Impressionism — with what it lacked, the luminous, airy envelope that surrounds things. Hence those compositions which, by means of colour, the elements of construction and “open-air” are reconciled and fused together at the same time as is added to their life, — a spiritualized essence of life — the most subtle and rigorous purity. One inevitably thinks of Gabriel, Mozart, Racine.

Simple for Léger and La Fresnaye, these reasons for return to colour are more complex in the case of the others. Villon's use of clear tones (as for the construction of the forms and painting) in his *Marching Soldiers* to render the rhythmic tread of the

ROGER DE LA FRESNAYE — ARTILLERY. 1912 — (1,30; 1,60) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS





ROGER DE LA FRESNAYE — THE CONQUEST OF THE AIR. 1913 — (2,16; 1,84)
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MRS SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND), NEW YORK

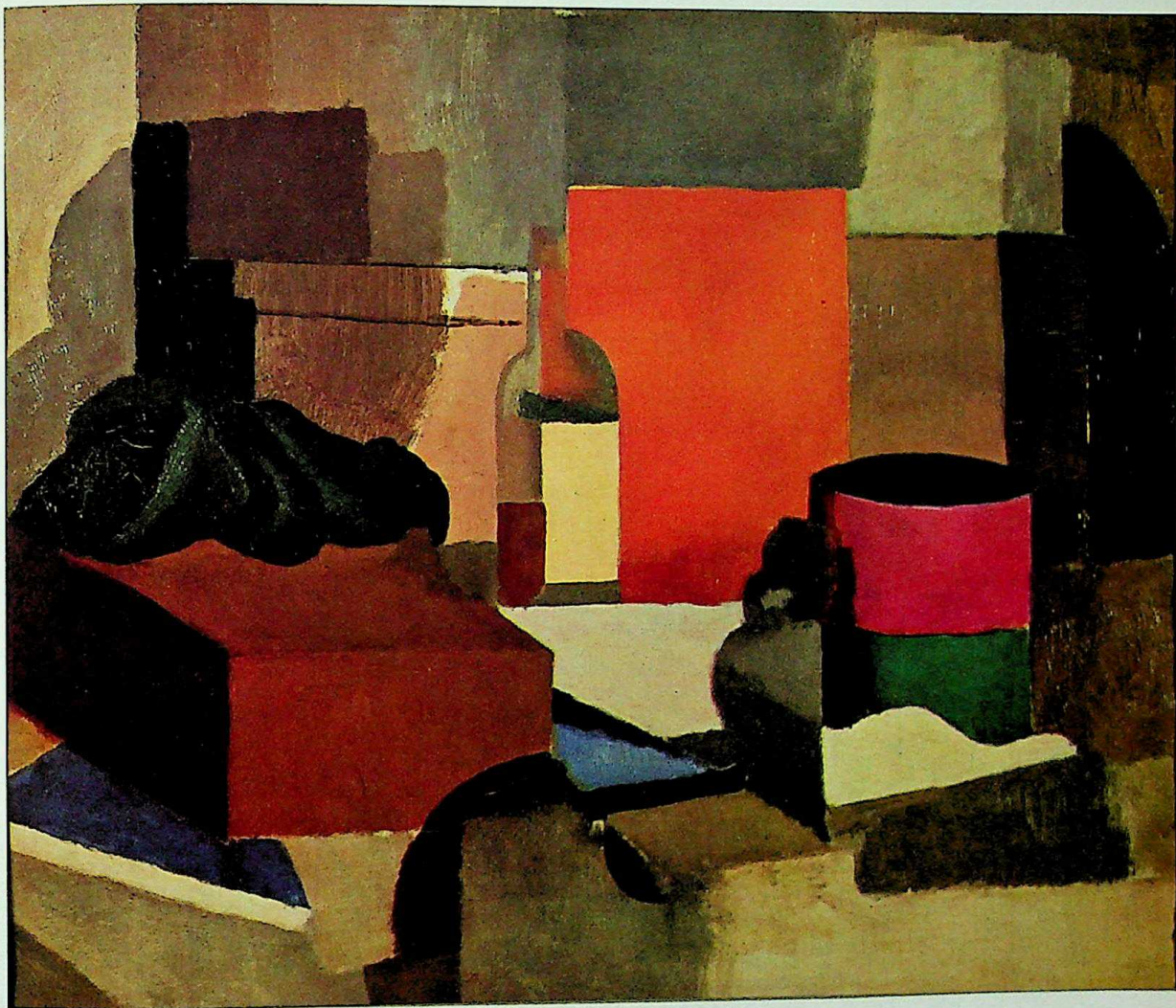
feet, does not prevent him from exploiting it for different purposes in other pictures, to express form or character for example. Likewise, it is now to evoke the dynamism of the sight that stimulated him (*The Football Players*), now to elucidate the character of the model (*Portrait of Stravinsky*) that Gleizes has recourse to colour that is more and more sustained. And it is the same with Lhote and Metzinger—each exhibitor of the Golden Section has his private reasons — which also vary with the particular works — for using a lively or intense palette.

The 1914 war was to sound the knell of the Golden Section group as it did of Cubism, and in a more final manner because its disciples, all of whom were French subjects, were called up on 2nd August and because the movement, less coherent than its elder brother, could not survive so tragic a crisis. There was naturally with the return of peace a second exhibition of the Golden Section in the rue Vavin in which different exhibitors of the 1912 exhibition participated. But this renewal, like that of its fellow, Cubism, had no further repercussions — the movement as such had perished, like peace — in August 1914.

At any rate, of the painters who had animated it, two deserve special mention, Jacques Villon and Fernand Léger. La Fresnaye, gassed in 1927, was destined never to recover and having been sent to a military hospital at Tours in September, 1918, dragged out these last years in one sanatorium after another, Cambo, Durtal, Grasse and Belligneux, only to return to die at Grasse, 27th November, 1925. Active to the end but hesitating between a Neo-Cubism (*The White Leaves*, 1921, *the Louis-Philippe Table*, 1922) which verges on the abstract and a Neo-traditionalism which harks back successively to Ingres, Poussin, El Greco and the Italian mannerists, he no longer had the strength to execute anything but water-colours, gouaches, drawings. But in these, despite their many admirable qualities, he was no longer able to show his capabilities nor fulfil the promise of such painting as *Artillery*, *The Card-Players*, *The Conquest of the Air*, *Man seated*. His was a tragic fate, a body of work cut short, despite masterpieces which reveal their author as one of the greatest designers of our time and despite his last *Self-portraits*, comparable with the finest drawings in the French tradition. And yet one wonders whether this interrupted work was not at any rate in part continued, realized and brought to full fruition in the paintings of Jacques Villon.

A late-comer to Cubism (1911) which he left for the Golden Section (1912), it was above all after the 1914 war that Jacques Villon became truly himself and in spite of indifference, poverty, persecution, was to prove his worth as he grew older and — during the Occupation — take his place in the front rank of the masters. Always an inquirer, he never ceased to take an interest in and give himself up to experiments. He becomes interested in abstract art from 1920-1923, practises a more direct kind of painting from 1923 to 1930, returns to abstraction about 1931 (*Amro*, *Phi*) and to the observation of reality about 1933, enriched as he was by his discoveries of the "logic of the science of colours" and from this period shows a marked predilection for clear, pure tones (*Man drawing*, 1935, *The Painter and his Model*, 1937). In 1935 his painting became more constructed, simplified into planes which divide the picture up with noble simplicity (*From where one turns one's back on Life*, *Adam*, *Eve*, *At the Feet of Omphalis*). His palette becomes paler in 1940, the colour is conceived in terms of values, and the canvas is built up on its subtle variations dictated by a severity which jeopardizes however neither its life nor its lightness (*From Toulouse to Albi*, 1941). Freer, less architectonic but brighter in colour, the works which followed in 1944 (*The Small Town*, *Notre-Dame-de-Vie*) are a prelude to experiments which took him more and more definitely in the direction of pure painting. Greatly "transposed" reality which Villon invariably takes as his starting-point — landscapes, races, labour in the fields, human beings — is the subject of a re-creation in terms of planes which he paints with increasing simplicity and in purer and purer colours and forms that are ever more exquisitely realized.

But the same constants are present throughout each phase of his career — first, love of life ("I became the Impressionist Cubist" he once wrote to me "and that is



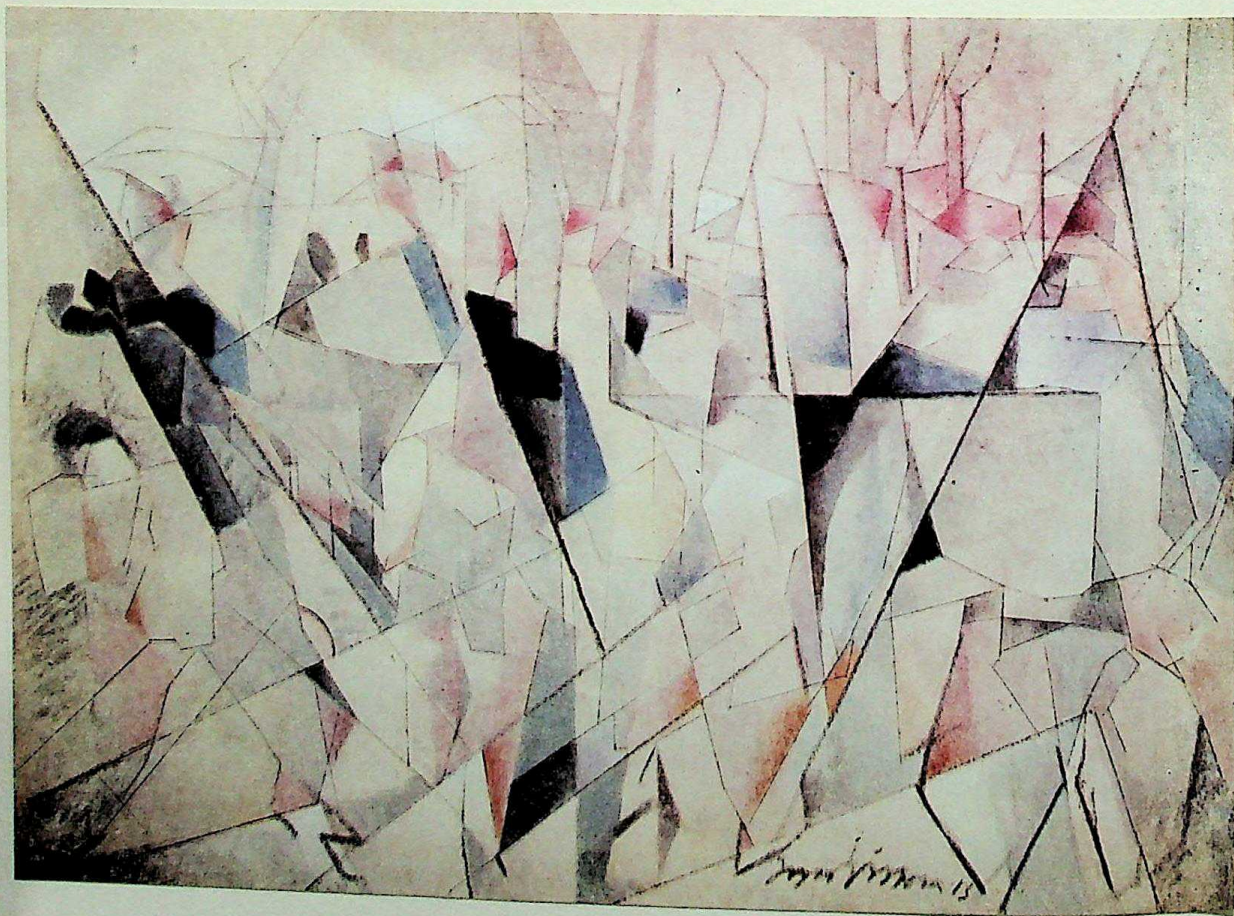
ROGER DE LA FRESNAYE - STILL-LIFE. 1914 - (0,73; 0,60) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

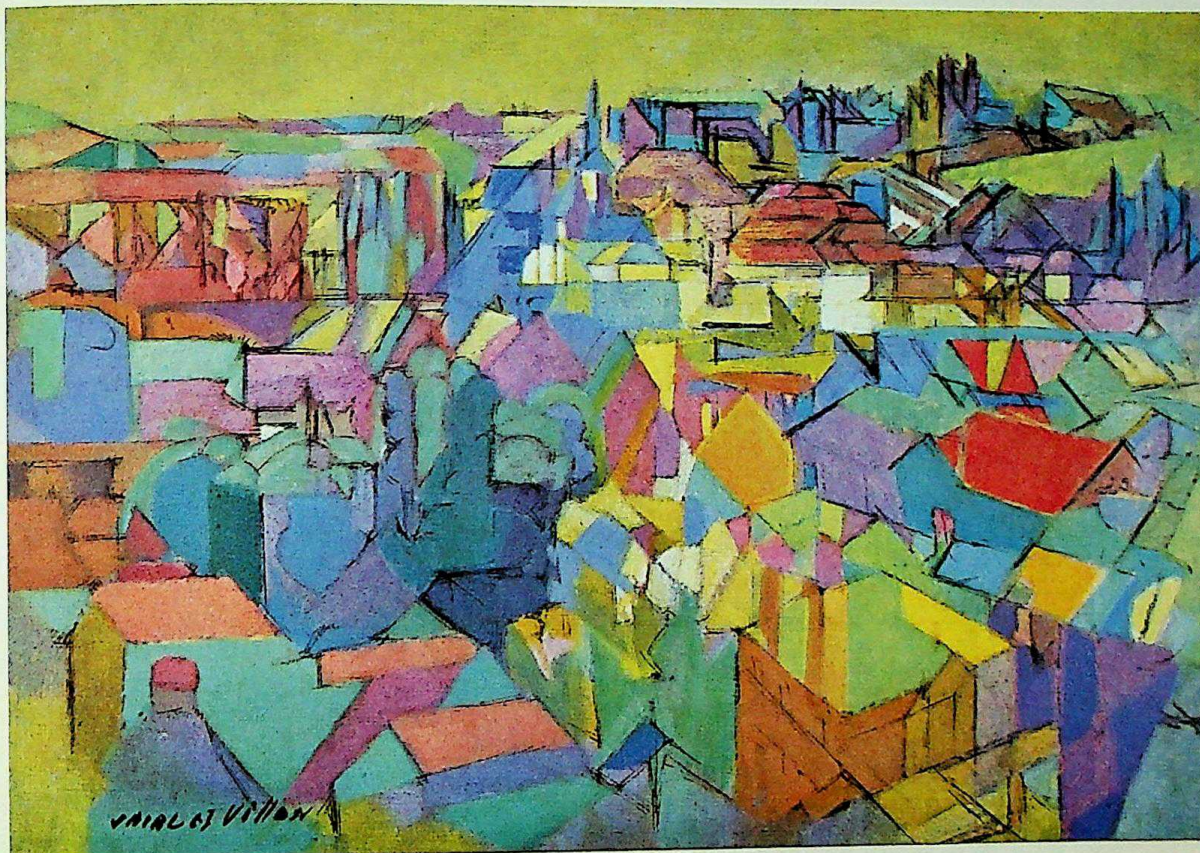
what I think I have remained") which is perhaps only the particular case of a more comprehensive love, that of life itself, the life he so much relishes whether he sees it pulsating in nature or in the human face. "I have always preferred the human face to still-life" he confessed to me.

And, far from denying this life, he aims at magnifying it, raising it to the level of art and transforming some inspiring spectacle into a picture "in its own right, creating by means of the organisation of the canvas a new category in which everything that is vague, all the mystery of the unknown... something that has all the poten-

tialities of a dream, can be revealed" was how he defined it to me. Taking Nature then as a starting-point from which he extracts a certain rhythm, he breaks it up in carefully pre-established planes, the relations between which are intended to re-create form and space, whereas the tones — the "colour-values" as he describes them — will set up this form in the atmosphere and people the space with air. Thus these colours are as fresh as they are luminous — pinks, mauves, almond-greens, lavender-blues, orange-yellows are all calmly arranged in thin, but never anaemic layers which increase the effect of irradiation. Enclosed within the boundaries of an uninsistent but severe line, they define a form which is always firm and nervous in its refined lightness. Thus assembled by this lucid mind that leaves nothing to chance, these forms give birth to architecture which is also music, a picture in which, as in the case of La Fresnaye, the moving life of appearances and moments of time is realized in a plastic purity as simple as it is severe. It is a fusion of Cubism and Impressionism and likewise of representational and abstract art, pure painting and poetry. And how conscious one is of the ease with which these syntheses are achieved and of the

JACQUES VILLON - SOLDIERS ON THE MARCH. 1913 - (0,65; 0,92) GALERIE LOUIS CARRÉ, PARIS





JACQUES VILLON - THE SMALL TOWN. 1944 - (0,55; 0,38) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS

discretion of the wellbred man, as cultivated as he is gifted, as intelligent as he is sensitive, as methodical as he is perspicacious, furthermore fastidious, prudent and bold, learned yet simple and essentially a Frenchman, like Racine, Corot, Seurat, of the most exquisite, resolute, accomplished and rarest quality.

Fernand Léger belongs to a very different race, like Villon, a native of Normandy but a member of that robust and tough breed which produced Géricault and Malherbe, Millet, Corneille, Poussin. Coming to Cubism — which he soon deserted — from Cézanne, inveigled into abstract art by his passion for dynamism when he returned to painting in 1916, his aim was to discover further means to express this dynamism which for him constitutes the very essence of modern life for which he has a feeling as lively as it is energetic. Fresh from memories of the guns he had so recently seen in action (he had been called up in the Artillery) he painted pictures of

machines, machines that is, of his invention which were however more machine-like than real machines and possessed of more movement and power than the machines of the actual world. Firm, severe drawing, strident colour applied in flat areas with the intention of obtaining contrasts between pure colours — yellows, reds, blues, blacks and whites — as undisguisedly and boldly as possible; an anonymous technique but painstaking and full-flavoured; space suggested by the opposition between large and normal planes; an insistent rhythm that is as broad and solemn as the act of breathing — all these elements contribute to his canvases (*The Disks*, 1918; *The Town*, 1919; *The Tugboat*, 1920) a strength and vehemence equal to those of the objects which inspire them. Man is almost always absent, as if the better to emphasize the terrible inhumanity of this world of steel and fire in which he appears only to integrate himself with it as its slave (*The Negro Chauffeur*, 1919).

But then man gradually assumes a growing importance until by 1921 he becomes the principle subject of Léger's pictures. He begins as a Robot but becomes humanized as time goes on, but only to live a superhuman life — the kind of life that enlarged, froze and petrified the majestic figures in Byzantine art, some of whose most grandiose expressions at Ravenna filled Léger with admiration. His recollection of the San Vitale mosaics is evident in the large individual figures (the *Woman with the Vase*) and still more in the large compositions (*Le Grand Déjeuner*) which the artist was working on at that time — frontality, immobility give these creations a hieratic quality whose effectiveness is increased by the implacable drawing, well-defined colour and impersonal execution.

Some uncompromisingly abstract pictures next follow these figures (1924), static works, they have been called, following Léger's directive. But is it not sometimes in the immobilization of dynamism that he is most effective? Executed possibly under the influence of Mondrian, they are pregnant with a vitality which we look for in vain in the Dutch artist's work; we are conscious of his feeling for the wall which the example of Byzantium had developed in Léger's work and which was never to cease making its presence felt.

The period of "objects in space" which followed this architectural period could be described as the replacement of abstract forms by objects which Léger arranges in a similar way and with which he pursues the same striving for monumentality (*Still-life with Playing-card King, Profile with Vase*, 1927). His palette is "taken down" and refined, the *matière* is duller as if the painter had frescoes in mind. But another, magic, power is added to this plastic power which shows that Léger, apparently indifferent to the Surrealists, felt like them and expressed better than they did the *extraordinary of the ordinary*; when has Dali made us as aware of the mystery of an umbrella and a bunch of keys as well as Léger has in these canvases in which the familiar objects are shown in broad planes weighted by a probably unconscious phantasy against a stark and uniform background?

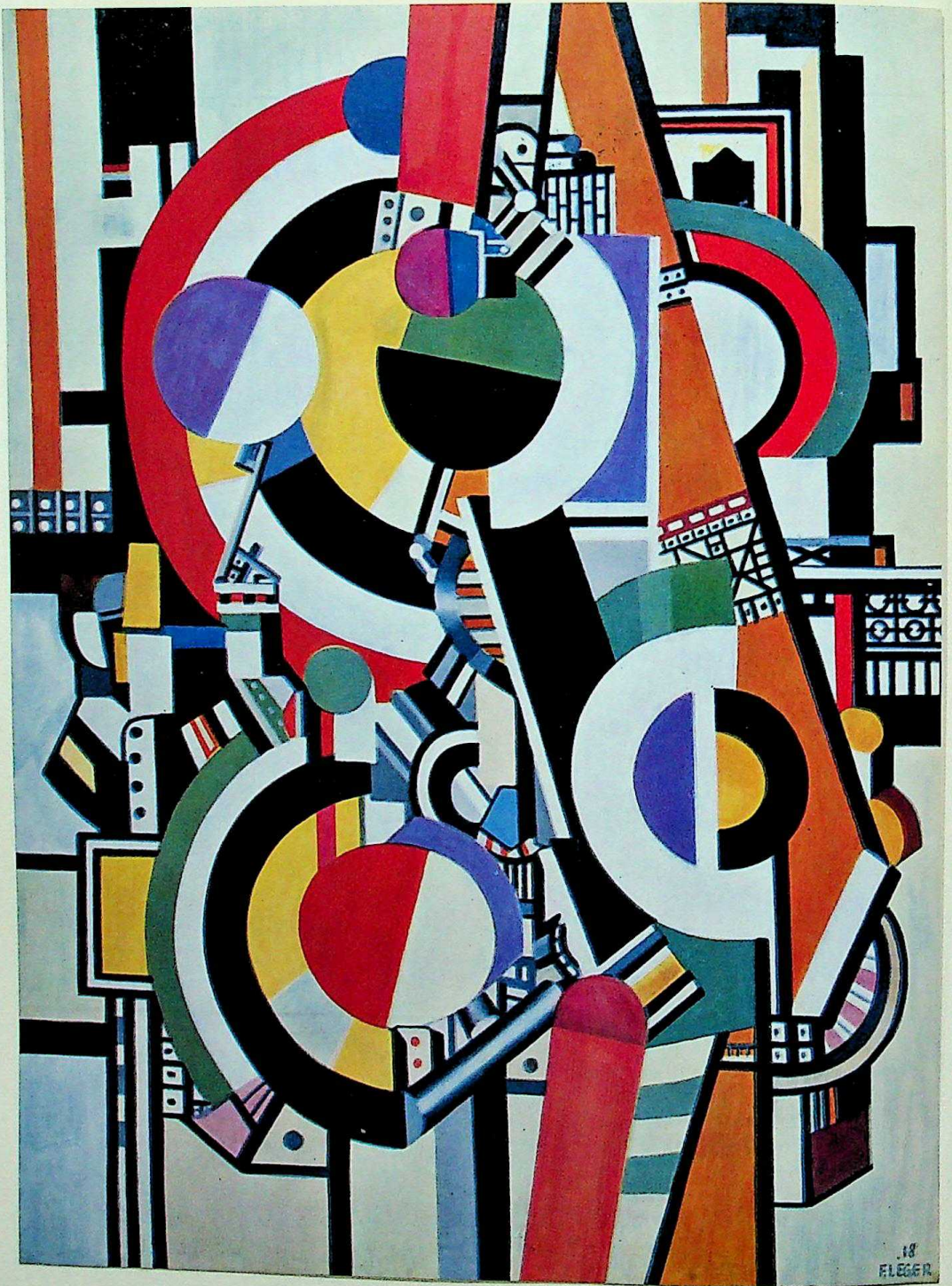
Return, then, to dynamism or at least to the expression of movement about 1935 (*the Sports*); American period (1940-1946); French period devoted to the exploitation of popular themes — bicycles, circuses, picnics, building-yards, etc, these customary distinctions should not blind us to the profound and magnificent unity of Léger's work which is always monumental. And doubtless it is in the art — I will not say of decoration — but of architecture — that he has shown his full capabilities. His pictures, *Leisure* (1949); *Builders* (1950); *Partie de Campagne* (1954), in which the drawing is somewhat lacking in backbone, the colour pitched in a somewhat high,

even strident key, the execution a trifle uncertain, may be less satisfactory than his masterly mosaics for the church of Plateau d'Assy (1946), the commemorative monument of Bastogne (1948) and above all his stained glass windows for the church of Andicourt (1950) and the University of Caracas (1954), not forgetting his mural ceramics and his tapestries broadly and individually treated and of monumental grandeur. Perhaps it is on such walls that Léger has given us the full measure of his genius.

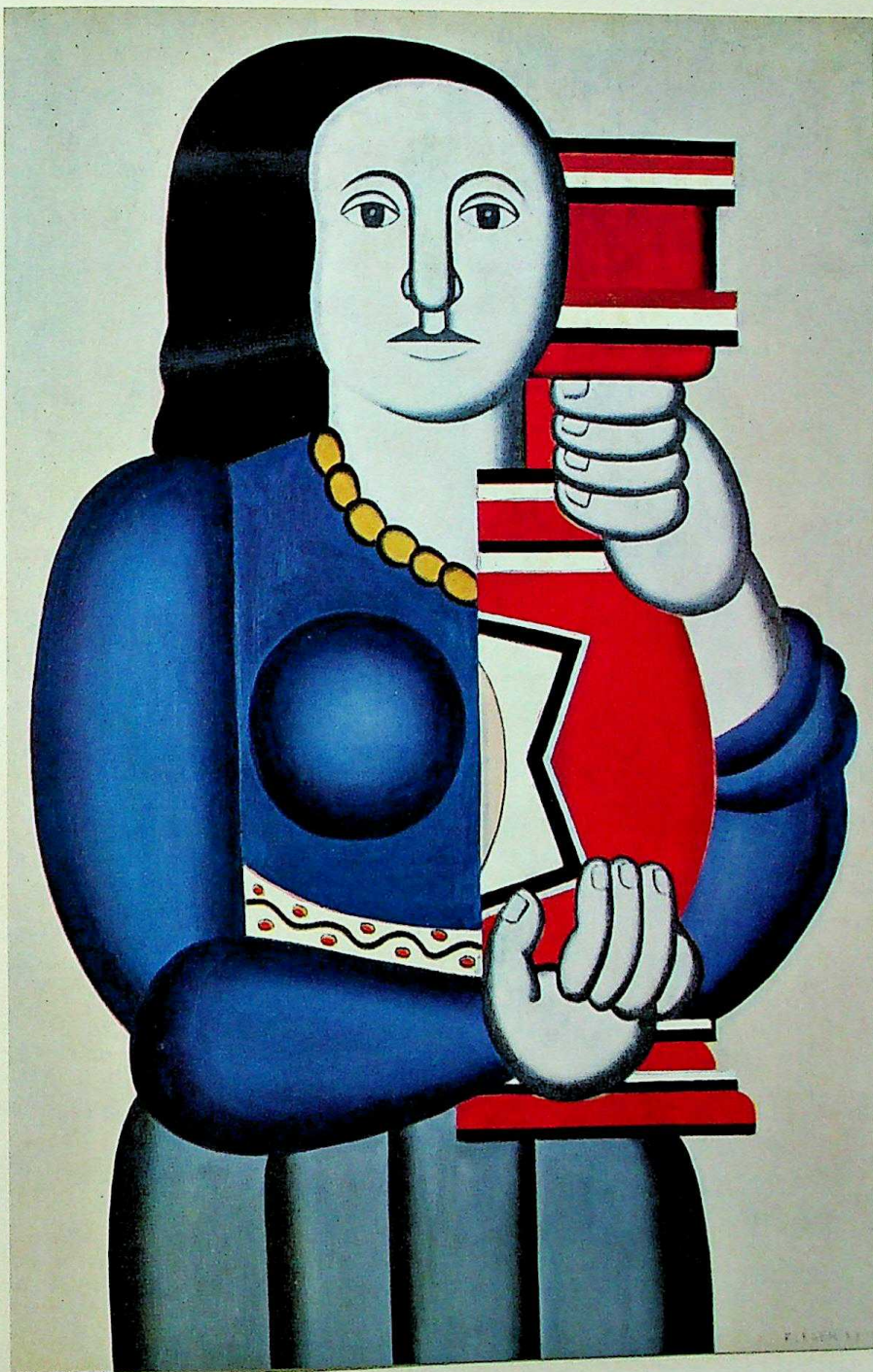
A vigorous rather than subtle art — but one in which an unexpected delicacy of light, colour and *matière* may often surprise us, and of a wholesomeness which keeps the romantic phantoms of Picasso at arms' length, an art that is classical in its equilibrium, its certainties, its unaffected authority, it is very possible that it may appear to the eyes of posterity not only the most characteristic expression of the style of our time but as *the* decisive step in the evolution of contemporary painting. No painting has in fact had more influence on other arts — the poster, typo-

FERNAND LÉGER - GEOMETRIC ELEMENTS. 1913 - (0,81; 1,00) PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS





FERNAND LÉGER - THE DISKS. 1918 - (2,40; 1,80) MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS



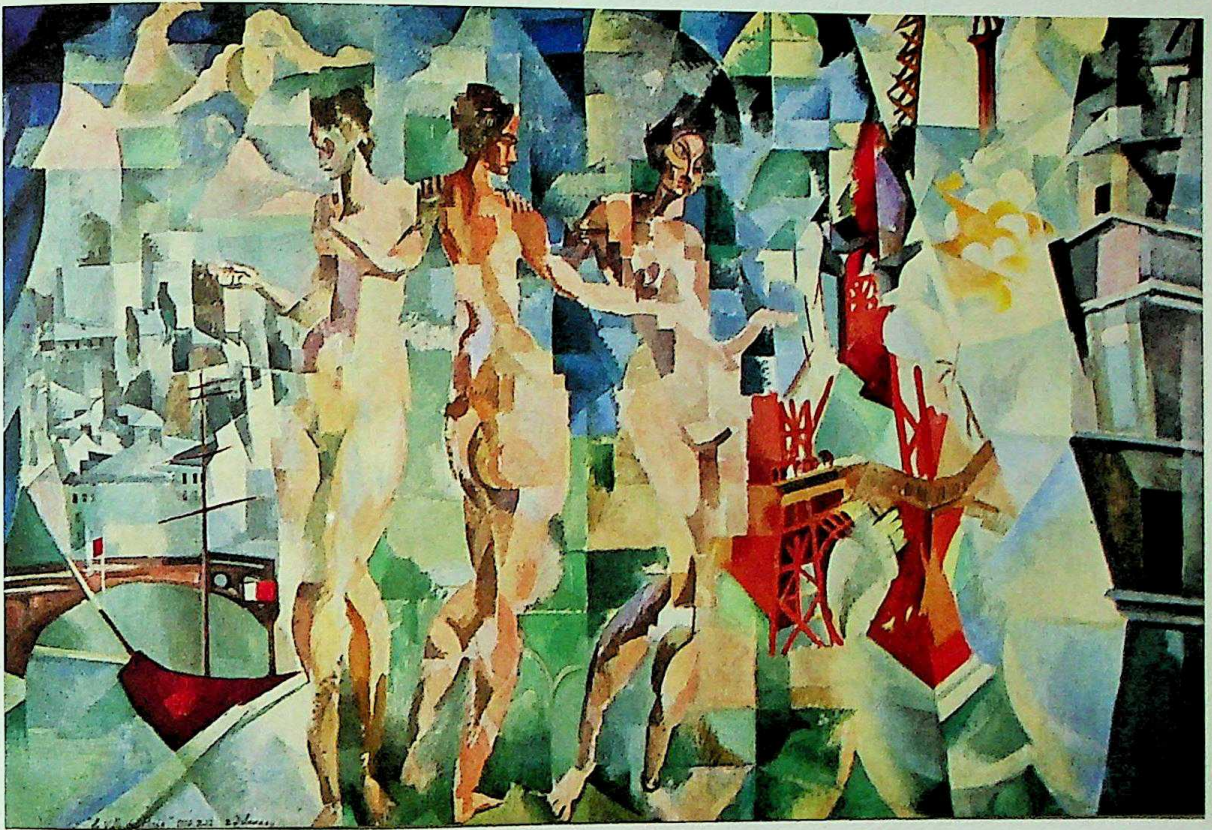
FERNAND LÉGER - THE WOMAN WITH THE VASE, 1927 - (1,46; 0,97) COLLECTION BARONNE GOURGAUD, PARIS

graphy, display, publicity, the cinema even (for which Léger created a masterpiece, *The Mechanical Ballet*, 1924). Perhaps we must go back to David or even further to Le Brun to find a French painter who has exercised so determining an effect on the framework of daily life. At the same time it may well be that no contemporary artist has opened up more avenues, fruitful avenues, to artists of the future. Less personal than Picasso's work and, because of this, a better model for others, freer from pictorial idioms of the past which haunt the Spanish artist to such an extent that he attacks them whereas they leave his French colleague undisturbed, so alien are they to him, Léger's realizations constitute such a sum-total of inventions of colour form and space, that unlike Kandinsky or Mondrian, he has no need to take refuge in abstraction. The elements of reality in recognizable form in his work are so unimportant as such that it would be absurd to deny them. With them, as Léon Gischia has so well expressed it "*modern art can finally live a life of its own*". A page has been turned in the history of art which "Orphism" and "Non-objective art" have had an equal share in turning.

Orphism and the *beginnings of non-objective painting*

WHEN Robert Delaunay joined the ranks of the Cubists for a short time and painted his series of *Towns* (1910) in a scale of grey tones and with a deep concern for construction, he had doubtless lost his way in an art alien to his own and was condemning himself to a less satisfactory method of expression than he had employed in his previous work. In the latter, in point of fact, after a brief encounter with Impressionism (1904) and Neo-Impressionism (1906) which he has interpreted in an extremely personal manner, he had given free rein to his two dominating passions — colour and movement. In the succession of pictures inspired by the apse of the church of Saint-Séverin in 1909 he had sent piers, gothic arches, ogival windows, vaults whirling round in a kind of pyrotechnical display juxtaposing reds, blues, greens, yellows, violets streaming with light, which he split up to obtain binary contrasts — anticipating in this way what he was later to call *simultaneous contrast*. But dependent though these paintings still were on tradition in the use that Delaunay makes in them of modelling and light and shade, they owed more to Cézanne from whom they borrowed their elliptical space and their careful feeling for construction. It is not then surprising that this Cézannism led the author to Cubism in which he occupies a completely independent place.

As opposed to Braque and Picasso, what interests him most at this time is the landscape or rather buildings, and in particular the Eiffel Tower on which he executed a series of variations (Basle Museum; the Guggenheim Foundation, New York;



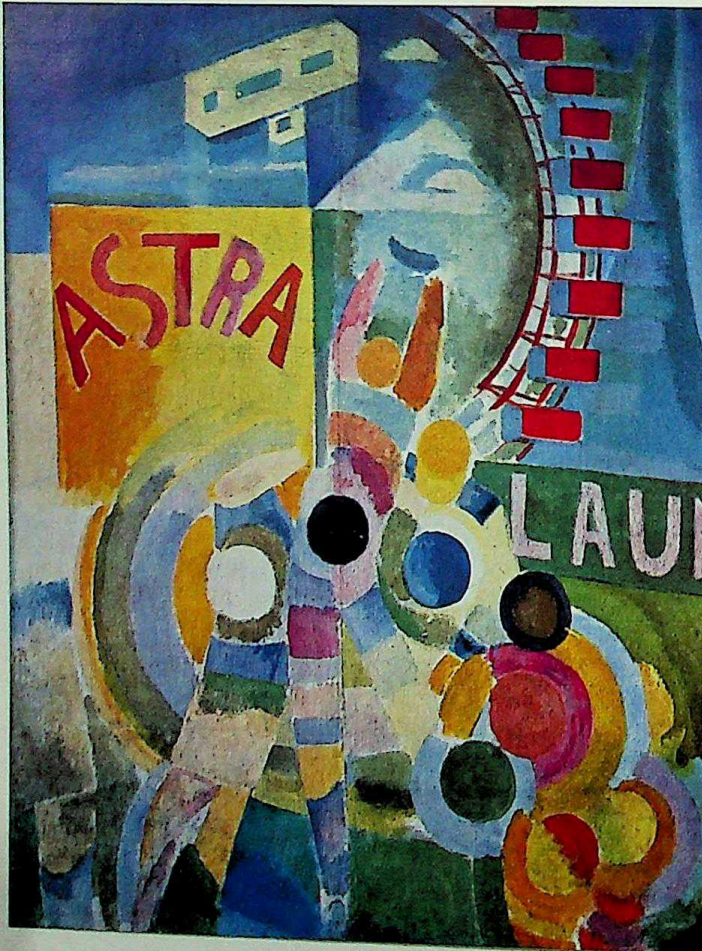
ROBERT DELAUNAY - THE TOWN OF PARIS. 1910/12 - (2,67; 4,06) MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE, PARIS

Krefeld Museum, etc.). Composed of curves, ellipses, spirals, acute angles, the rhythm of the design is wedded to the construction on which rearing planes, sliding over each other, confer their dynamism. In other words, Delaunay was still rejecting the equilibrium of the orthodox Cubists and pursuing researches analogous to the slightly earlier ones of Léger, for like him, he was sensitive to the feeling of the continual growth in life in general and modern life in particular⁷⁶.

It should therefore cause us little surprise that Delaunay should have shaken himself free of this School in 1912 in his series of *Windows* — “windows opening on to a new reality”, as he wrote himself. Multicoloured, brilliantly luminous and pure, these works are an admission of the artist's effort to use nothing but simultaneous “contrasts, arranged in this or that way, creating architecture, coloured arrangements unfolding like coloured phrases... animating the surface of the canvas with a kind of measured rhythms pursuing, overtaking each other in movements of coloured masses, colour that acts in this case almost as an independent element”. No more drawing, or at least no more lines. No more constructed form. The objects are treated allusively, by details which recall, here the fold of a curtain, there a hint of a window.

No chiaroscuro, no space. Nothing except the colour whose lustre is multiplied by a thin, transparent *matière*; and this colour is employed in accordance with a principle which Apollinaire was to formulate shortly afterwards in the following words, "If the primary colour does not determine its complementary, it explodes in the atmosphere and simultaneously produces all the colours of the solar spectrum". Orphic painting was born.

Its baptism followed closely on its birth and Apollinaire was responsible for the label. He had been the first to speak of "Orphism" in a lecture given at the gallery "Der Sturm" in Berlin, 18th January, 1913 and published the next month in the review of the same name. His mind still full of the book he had just finished, the *Bestiaire* or *Cortège d'Orphée*, the poet had said of his friend's painting, "This tendency may be called Orphism?", doubtless to indicate that it "could soothe the wild beasts,



ROBERT DELAUNAY - CARDIFF FOOTBALL TEAM
1923 - (I,46; I,13) GALERIE LOUIS CARRÉ, PARIS



ROBERT DELAUNAY - DISKS.
1912 - (diam. 1,34)
TREMAYNE COLLECTION, U.S.A.

move rocks and trees, sweep along with its music even the most refractory objects" as one of the exegetists of the movement wrote in *Vie des Lettres*, October issue, 1921.

If Delaunay was its promoter, an important place must be reserved by his side for his wife, Sonia Terk and the Czech painter Kupka who, settled in Paris from the year 1895, had exhibited a painting, *Yellow Scale*, in the Salon d'Automne of 1910, the title of which suffices to indicate the essentially chromatic nature of his experiments. A friend and neighbour of the Villon brothers at 7, rue Lemaître, Puteaux, he had always been protected from the seductions of Cubism by his love of colour, that is colour as a thing in itself, "form and subject" as Delaunay said. Thus he had rapidly progressed to a kind of painting in which colour is no longer employed to produce a picture or even a suggestion of objects, but in an absolute fashion, because of its decorative and expressive power, in the way sound is used by the musician. He had created the first expressions of this non-figurative art which no longer represents any phenomenon of the outside world, however much transposed,

in the year 1911, and presented three examples of it in the Salon des Indépendants of 1912 under the title of *Planes of Colour*, and some months later two others in the Salon d'Automne under the titles of *Amorpha*, *Fugue in two Colours* and *Amorpha, warm chromatic*. A new painting was thus established which Delaunay also arrived at simultaneously.

He himself has let us into the secret of his prejudice against appearances. "These reminiscences of objects did not worry me in Cubism"⁷⁸ he said, "since Cubism is graphic, the disposition of colour is linear, but in the matter of colour which is dynamic and of a non-linear character, there is a clash of interests. It occurred to me therefore to suppress the perceived images of reality, the objects which debased the coloured order. I attacked the problem of formal colour". The victory can be seen in the series of *Disks* and *Circular Forms* which he began in 1912 and in which, without more ado, he passed from the figurative tradition to the "non-objective" (*Painting Pure Reality*)⁷⁹ — such being the term he chose to describe it. Simultaneously Sonia Terk moved over to this kind of "non-objective" painting and applied it to the decoration of a chest which she exhibited at the Herbstsalon of 1913 in Berlin.

It was not that the Delaunays, husband and wife, were abandoning representational painting — as opposed to Kupka who in 1913 devoted himself to his series of *Vertical Planes* and *Philosophic Architecture*. Some of their masterly examples, inspired by that spirit, were in fact painted in the years 1912 to 1914. At that time Robert Delaunay executed his admirable variations on the theme of football, a theme likewise cherished by Gleizes at that period (*The Cardiff Team*, 1912-1913) and Sonia painted her dazzling *Bal Bullier* with no less verve. But at the same time they gave themselves up to the delights of the "non-objective". She produced in this genre her highly personal illustrations for Blaise Cendrars' *Prose du Transibérien et de la Petite Jehanne de France* (1913) whereas he continued with his *Circular Forms* (Amsterdam Museum, Guggenheim Foundation, Museum of Modern Art, New York, etc.). Some of their works — *Homage to Blériot*, executed by Delaunay in 1914, for example — stand half-way between representational and non-figurative art. With the admiration of Apollinaire and Blaise Cendrars behind it, Orphism attracted new recruits and began to exert an influence. In Paris, or rather at Louveciennes, where the Delaunays spent the summer of 1913, the Americans Bruce, Morgan Russell and Macdonald Wright joined it and Marc Chagall displayed a passing interest in its experiments. Sonia Delaunay produced "simultaneous" clothes — multicoloured fabrics which Apollinaire discussed in the *Mercure de France* (1st January, 1914). In Germany the repercussions of the movement were more considerable still. Known in Munich since 1911 where Jawlensky and Kandinsky had asked him to show at the *blaue Reiter* Exhibition, admired the following year in Berlin at the second exhibition of the same group by Make, Marc and Klee on whom he exercised a vital influence, Delaunay held a one-man show at the gallery known as *Der Sturm* in 1913 which made such an impression that the review of the same name published in their August issue an article by him, and the Herbstsalon welcomed twenty of his paintings and twenty-five of Sonia Delaunay's. Few artists and few movements have had so profound an influence on Expressionist and Abstract German painting as Delaunay and Orphism.

The fact is that Orphism as practised by him was tied up with two tendencies which it embodied in its unity. Non-objective in some examples of Delaunay's and his wife's, in all those by Kupka it is detached from reality — which Cubism had never forsaken — more uncompromisingly even than in the Léger of the *Contrasts of*

Forms. And Kupka shares with German Expressionism at any rate its taste for lively colour. But whether it serves to translate a spectacle borrowed from the outside world or to realise a completely non-objective work, this colour is the soul of Orphism. Delaunay has, as has often been stated, a passion for colour, an almost amorous passion, and few artists have employed it as generously and originally as he did. Heightening it, by contrast, that is, simultaneous contrast, he arranges it in simple and so to speak shifting patterns which sometimes affect the form of curvilinear triangles, vaguely lozenge shapes, undulating rectangles and, above all, that of circles. Did not the circle faithfully convey the painter's taste for dynamism? Readily connected through diagonals or elliptical arcs which reinforce the movement of the composition, these multicoloured disks create a whirling rhythm of intoxicating power which sometimes evokes the course of the very stars and attains a cosmic force rarely met with in painting (*Circular Forms : the Sun and Moon*, 1912-1913).

In this way Delaunay makes an effort to annex time to the spatial art of painting, an element of which he writes, "the introduction of time into the structure of the picture gives the new constructive affirmation that was necessary, and its strength in this new reality endows painting with a much more effective force than that of even a talented echo of nature". From this moment on there ceases to be any opposition between the temporal dynamism of this kind of painting and its effectiveness as decoration. On the contrary, the latter is the function of the former because of the very conception which the artist held of modern, monumental painting. Does not "a tumultuous, living and dynamic epoch" require painting that befits its spirit on the walls? Once these paintings are no longer mere "windows or voids in the surface and proportion of the building" it is a good thing if, breaking with the static tradition of mural painting, the contemporary artist covers the walls with spirited decorations in which the frenzy of the rhythm fits in with that of colour-light. It is only later, doubtless, that Delaunay was given the chance of satisfying his passion as a born decorator. This was when he carried out two vast mural projects, one for the Railways Pavilion, the other for the Air Pavilion at the International Exhibition of 1937, in Paris. But the generous decorator of 1937 was already in embryo in the founder of Orphism who remained unswervingly faithful to the spirit and even the themes of his Orphic manner. Eiffel Towers, Sports, Disks continued to spring to life under his lyrical brush which showed a fleeting interest in the Nude (1915) and in still-life subjects (Portugal, 1916).

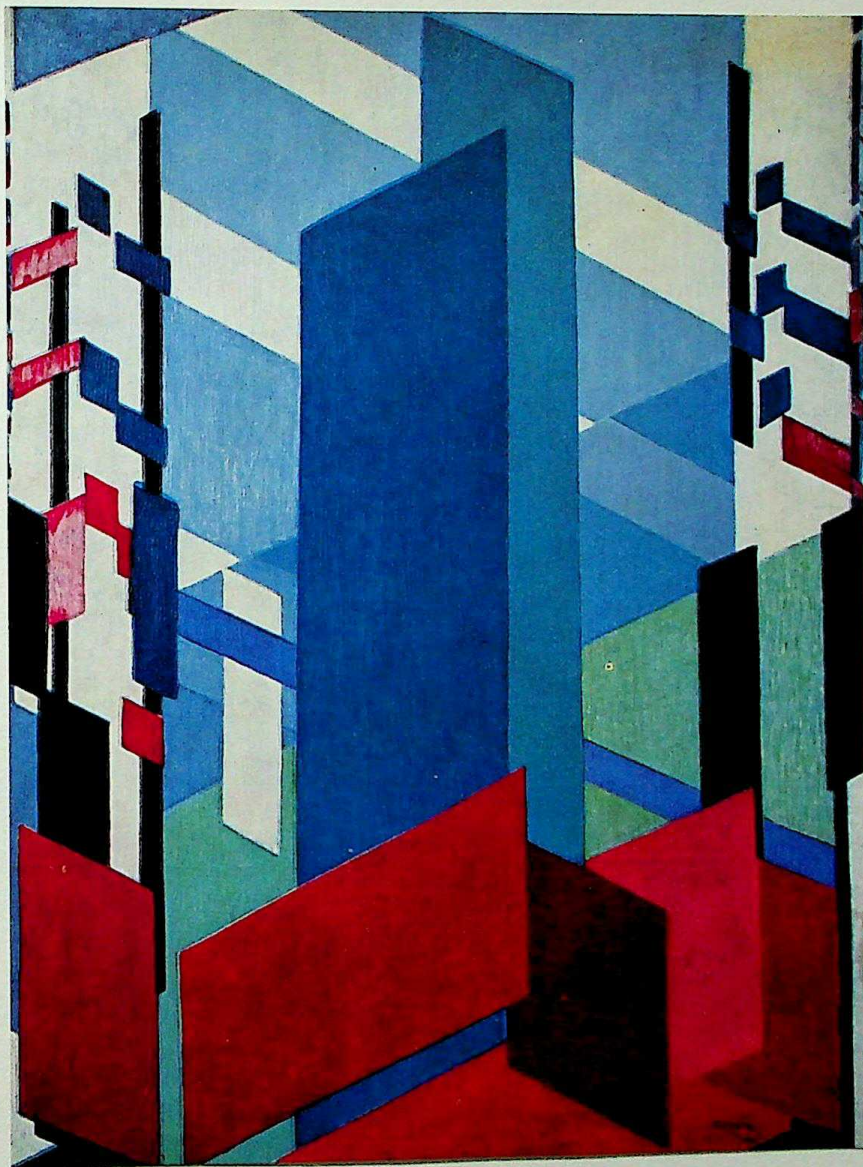
The fact that Léger in 1913 with his *Contrast of Forms*, Delaunay the previous year with his *Circular Forms*, Kupka a little earlier still should have similarly arrived at "non-objective" formulas proves that abstract art was in the air at this period in Paris. Nor are these three masters the only ones to have discovered it. Other artists did so too, possibly even before them, Picabia and Rossiné, for example. The Musée National d'Art Moderne has recently hung a large oil on canvas, signed and dated February, 1910, completely abstract and composed of festoons, by the last-mentioned, a Russian who settled down in Paris in 1909 where he participated regularly in the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. The festoons and garlands interlace and intertwine against a ground of pale yellow, and one would be certainly justified in claiming priority in the discovery of abstract invention for its creator, if Picabia had not anticipated him in this genre.

This Paris-born painter with a Cuban father and French mother had an amazing temperament. He was so keen on independence that he refused ever to make a slave of himself and spent his time, even more than Picasso, in changes of direction, renunciations, veritable artistic suicides! Sceptical towards everything, including himself, an anarchist by inclination and design, an Impressionist one day, the next mad about Gauguin, he interpreted the lesson of "synthetism" to the point of radically transposing the landscapes which moved him, making them unrecognizable, taking their nature as landscapes away from them, severing as it were the umbilical cord which had hitherto connected the work to the vision which had inspired it. But what of the landscapes, coloured pencil sketches with colour reminiscent of Gauguin which he executed in 1909⁸⁰? Exceptions possibly, but they are after all, "non-objective" landscapes, to borrow Delaunay's terminology, non-figurative landscapes in which no object can be identified and which are in fact mere combinations of lines, colours, forms. It was an easy step from this art to an art totally free from representation; Picabia who had already in 1907 and 1908 executed abstract drawings took it in his stride, dashing off a water-colour the same year which he amused himself by calling *Indiarubber*. It is indisputably the first abstract work in colour.

As we fix this too frequently forgotten order of events, one fact stands out — the supremacy of Paris as a cradle of abstract art, and furthermore that its appearance in France preceded its appearance in Germany. Kandinsky had not yet transposed the striped dress of a woman encountered in a Munich street into a non-figurative water-colour, the genesis of which he relates in his *Regards sur le Passé* (1910) when Picabia had painted his *India-rubber* — a year earlier in point of fact — and Rossiné his large, entirely abstract oil-painting in February of the last-mentioned year. Thus abstract painting was on the point of undergoing an important development in Paris just when it was being thwarted and retarded by the consolidation of Cubism.

Nothing is more significant from this point of view than the development of Picabia and Rossiné, who after looking at the works of Picasso and Braque re-examined the nature of reality and for a time returned to Cubism (*The Town of Paris, Mother-nity*); only, however to turn their backs on it very soon and paint spirited canvases inspired by the dynamism of life which they had now discovered the means of rendering in terms of paint. Picabia was certainly successful in this in his *Procession in Seville* of 1912 which he showed at the Salon des Indépendants the following year, and Rossiné in his *Studio* of 1911 which formerly hung in the Musée d'Art Moderne. The Cubist wave and the spirit of the Golden Section thus swept away abstract art in Paris, or rather, would have done, if, during the apostasy of Picabia and Rossiné, Kupka had not come to certain conclusions about abstract art and remained imperturbably faithful to them, more deliberately abstract than Kandinsky was in Munich where, during these years, figurative works alternate in his production (*Der blaue Reiter*, 1911) with non-figurative works (*The Black Arc*, 1912. *Landscape with red Stain*, 1913) and soon paintings that are completely abstract.

The fact is that from 1912 on the wind of abstraction was sweeping more strongly over Europe. In Italy Balla allowed himself to be momentarily hypnotised and Magnelli made a début with his "non-objective" works. At Moscow, which on the brink of the first World War was about to become along with Paris (and certainly more than either Munich or Berlin) the most alive and productive centre of modern plastic experiments, abstraction was the common denominator in the schools which



FRANCOIS KUPKA - PHILOSOPHIC
ARCHITECTURE. 1913 - (1,43;
1,12) GALERIE LOUIS CARRÉ,
PARIS

were founded there and partook in the struggle. There was the Rayonnism of Larionov and his wife Nathalie Gontcharova whose manifesto did not appear until 1913, a year later than their first paintings; the Suprematism of Malevitch which develops within a year from his *Woman with Buckets of Water* (1912) to his famous *Square on a white Background*, shown at the end of the following year; constructivism and "non-objectivism", a few years junior to the movements mentioned. In Paris the abstract current was gathering strength. A young Russian painter, Anton Pevsner, who was later to devote himself to sculpture and create the vast corpus of work with which we are familiar, and who had been living in France for two years,



FRANCIS PICABIA - UDNIE. 1913 - (3,00; 3,00) MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE, PARIS

declared his allegiance to it in his *Abstract Forms* (1913) of the Museum of Modern Art. (N. Y.). Delaunay and his wife and Léger made their contributions, and Picabia in 1913 staged a brilliant return to it. There is nothing in his work however to equal the immense, masterly compositions inspired by the dance of a ballerina whom he calls "Udnie", whom he had applauded on a liner during his return from America to Europe. In the canvases entitled *Udnie* (Musée National d'Art Moderne), *I see in memory my beloved Udnie* (Chicago Museum), the swiftness of the dance, its lightness and rhythm are marvellously transposed in plastic terms — supple and nervous drawing, discreet and, so to speak, airy palette, vigorous composition where on a diagonal axis the lively volutes of the forms, diaphanous *matière*, nimble execution, everything combines, wit, taste, firmness and discretion, to create an impression of a graceful whirl-wind. Confronted with these lines, tones, this orderliness which makes no attempt at representation, we see the dance and hear the music. Rarely has non-figurative art been richer in suggestion and poetic fantasy. A fugitive from Cubism, nevertheless enriched by it, Picabia here seems on the way to becoming the happy champion of abstract art, a rôle in which he was shortly afterwards to refuse to continue.

Why, after the uncertainty of the years 1911 and 1912 do we see this brilliant consolidation of abstract art in 1913? Had Cubism anything to do with it? Some critics and even painters who based their view on personal experiences have thought so. Hence Mondrian for example, who, greatly influenced by Cubism from 1912 to 1915, was to evolve late in life, as we know, a severely abstract painting. What are we to think of their opinions?

One's first impulse is to contradict them. Did not the strict Cubists, Braque, Picasso, Juan Gris stay unshakeably faithful to representational art? And did not the heterodox Cubists to the precise extent to which they shook off the hold of Cubism, move towards abstraction? Thus Delaunay and Léger and in due course Gleizes and Jacques Villon, not omitting Herbin. Cubism, furthermore, had no more effect on the evolution of Kandinsky at Munich — how different when it came to Orphism — than it had on Kupka's in Paris. The cases of Picabia and Rossiné seem to prove much more that Cubism ran counter to their adherence to abstract art. Their abstractionism seems to derive from the Fauves, Gauguin, nay even Claude Monet rather than from Cubism. Kandinsky always professed a great admiration for the Impressionist master. Delaunay's chromatism is situated at the junction of the transparent luminosity of the Impressionist and the musical vehemence of the Fauves. As for the Master of Pont-Aven who was Picabia's source of inspiration in his abstract landscape of 1909, did he not say to his followers that "art is an abstraction : abstract it from Nature by dreaming in front of it," and to Van Gogh, on the subject of the portrait he was making "after" him, "the drawing is altogether special. It is a complete abstraction." But can we not discern even more than in the painter of the *Yellow Christ* preliminary signs of abstract painting in Odilon Redon? Remove from one of the portraits or compositions the personage occupying the foreground, retain the background alone and do we not find abstract, even "tachist" works constituted by the association of the unreal as well as unrealistic colours which do not represent anything — neither sky nor clouds nor light, and which, as music and the sonority they create, are their own justification? Kandinsky passed a year at the Sèvres in 1906. Redon had a show at the Durand-Ruel gallery in 1906. Did the Russian visit her? It would be no surprise, for the non-figurative works that Kan-

dinsky painted from 1910 to 1914 present so many analogies with the back-grounds of the painter of *Pegasus* and even with certain fantastic compositions such as *Submarine Vision* (1904). Cubism would appear to have nothing in common with abstract art.

But Mondrian's testimony cannot be refuted, and in truth in Cubism not one but many experiments and achievements prepare the way for non-figurative painting. When Gleizes and Metzinger say of painting, "it is not necessary for it to evoke the memory of a water-jug, a guitar, a glass..."; when the former considers that "the notion of imitative art interferes with the way of plastic expression" and agrees with his friend in proclaiming, "let pictures imitate nothing and present us with their own justification", is he not apologising and even preparing the way for the experiments of abstract painters? Ozenfant and Jeanneret were not wrong when later on in their study *La Peinture Moderne*, they credited Cubism with having given the art of painting an "all-important freedom (which) it still lacked, the freedom that allowed the elimination of the exterior subjects and the making of real pictures instead of more or less imitative representations". By extolling "not an art of imitation, but an art of conception which tends to raise itself to the state of creation" and "pure effusion" as Apollinaire magnificently expresses it, Cubism was preparing through its spirit, experiments and aspirations, the ways to abstract painting, ways which, oddly enough, it appeared to close by its own realisations.

But do not the latter, if we examine them more closely, also seem capable of producing the abstract painting in question? For, after all, some of them are more abstract than the first creations, non-figurative only, of that art. The attitude of Gris who divided his canvas into circles, squares, lozenges, cylinders of which he made a bottle, is more abstract than that of Kandinsky who transposes the multicoloured dress of the Munich girl in which the robe is no longer recognizable as such, or even that of Picabia who produces the pictorial equivalent of Udnie's dance. Malevitch himself was aware that his paintings always had their starting-point in reality. Very different is the process of the artist who derives his inspiration from nature and interprets it to the extent of removing its outward façade, and producing non-figurative results, very different that of the painter whose point of departure is the painting itself, the composition, the plastic disposition which he hopes to realize. The former owes little to the productions of Cubism (if we except its spirit) but the latter is considerably in its debt. It is not altogether by chance that this attitude found one of its first defenders in the former Cubist, Mondrian, who in passing from non-figurative to abstract painting was merely refusing to produce what Gris for his part was anxious to interpret in "figurative" terms.

So that it would seem that the relations between "non-objective" art and Cubism are twofold. Non-figurative, the former preceded the latter, was then countered by it and was able to blossom forth only because of the anti-Cubist reaction which in 1912 carried painting on towards dynamism, colour, lyricism and effusion. Abstract, the one is, with rare exceptions, demonstrably prior to the other whose purity of purpose it inherited. And in both cases "non-objective" painting profited from Cubism which still stands as the major event of the first fifteen years of the century, the pole round which the pictorial experiments in France and the world at large crystalised for more than twenty years.

WHAT a distance painting covered then between 1888 and 1914! Certainly greater than that it had covered from the middle of the fifteenth to the last decade of the nineteenth century. That perspicacious painter, Gischia, saw this clearly when he wrote⁸¹, "there is a much bigger gap between Léger and Cézanne than between Cézanne and Poussin. Between Cézanne and Poussin there is a nuance. Between Léger and Cézanne there is a world." It goes without saying that the distance separating Delaunay's non-objective *Circular Forms, Sun and Moon*, from the *Mona Lisa* is astronomical, and even from the *Olympia*, the *Young Man in the red Waistcoat* and Sérusier's *Talisman* it is no less.

1888 to 1914 — only twenty-six years. But in these twenty-six years painting re-assessed more problems, pursued more researches, advocated more formulas, re-thought its nature and vocation more fundamentally than it had done through the five preceding centuries.

The revolution which had slowly been effected during the thirteenth, fourteenth and part of the fifteenth centuries, first in France and then in Italy and Flanders was less radical than that which Paris brought about alone in two and a half decades. Fernand Léger was not wrong when on 5th May, 1913, he declared in the course of a conference at the Wassilief Academy, "Many people... think that modern painting... will return to what it has been agreed to call 'the everyday style of painting'. This is a very great error. When an art like this is in possession of all the means which allow it to produce works absolutely complete in themselves, it is going to stay for a very long time".

Is forty years a long time? No one can say. But what no one can deny is that the last forty years of French painting — which will be the subject of my second volume — have been and are still the offshoots of the twenty-six years of pictorial creation dealt with in this present work.

NOTES

- 1 - Taking into account, of course, new historical, economic and social conditions etc. such as the decline of patronage, the crisis of public taste, the development of the role of picture-dealers, the competition of photography, and shortly, that of the cinema, etc.
- 2 - It will be remembered in this connection that the French of 1860 and Italians of the *quattrocento* were equally fortunate in encountering only second-rate examples of the art that was to renew theirs — Roman copies of Greek sculpture, prints, inferior, despite their quality, to the masterpieces of Chinese or Japanese paintings. Adequately representative of the aesthetic system to which they belonged, to be fruitful sources of inspiration, the works in question were not final enough to discourage and kill freedom of interpretation. They proposed without imposing, served as springboards rather than models and therefore allowed the elaboration of new and original formulas.
- 3 - It should however be noted that the Impressionists do not completely abandon geometric perspective and often provide this luminous or atmospheric perspective with a kind of skeleton of lines moving towards a vanishing point.
- 4 - It will not be forgotten that Renoir at his peak, the Renoir of the *Baigneuses*, post 1890, was also extremely free in his treatment of anatomy. Probably less for purely plastic reasons than to satisfy his taste for a certain kind of femininity.
- 5 - In *L'Occident*, October, 1903 (article reprinted in *Théories*, Paris 1920, pp. 166-171).
- 6 - *Ibid.*
- 7 - We should also mention their interest in the marionette theatre. Ranson composed some puppet plays, performed in 1892 and published in 1901 in the *Mercure de France* under the title *L'Abbé Prout, guignol pour les vieux enfants*. They produced the *Farce du Pâté* and the *Sept Princesses* of Maeterlinck's at the house of the Counsellor Coulon, rue de la Faisanderie, and Bonnard took an interest in the puppet-theatre in the rue Ballu, animated by his brother-in-law, the musician Claude Terrasse.
- 8 - M. DENIS, *Art et Critique*, 23rd August 1890.
- 9 - Albert AURIER, the *Mercure de France*, March 1891.
- 10 - Maurice DENIS, *op. cit.*
- 11 - Albert AURIER, the *Mercure de France*, March 1891.
- 12 - Maurice DENIS, *op. cit.*
- 13 - Maurice DENIS, *L'Occident*, October 1903.
- 14 - Albert AURIER, *op. cit.*
- 15 - Maurice DENIS, *L'Occident*, May 1909.
- 16 - Maurice DENIS, *Preface to the catalogue of the Gauguin, Painters of Pont-Aven and the Academy Jullian*, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1936.
- 17 - M. DENIS, *Art et Critique*, 23rd August, 1890.
- 18 - Albert AURIER, *op. cit.*
- 19 - Jean VERKADE, *Le Tourment de Dieu*, Paris 1924, p. 94.
- 20 - Maurice DENIS, *L'Art et la Vie*, October 1896.
- 21 - Maurice DENIS, *L'Occident*, September 1907.
- 22 - Maurice DENIS, *Ibid.*
- 23 - M. DENIS, *Art et Critique*, 23rd August, 1890.
- 24 - Gustave GEFFROY, *La Vie artistique*, Second series, Paris, 1893, p. 381.
- 25 - *Les Peintres Cubistes*, Paris, 1913.
- 26 - Subtitle of his *Théories*, Paris, second edition, 1920.
- 27 - And consequently, with greater reason, prior to German Expressionismus which one might summarily define as the combined product of the influence of Toulouse-Lautrec, the Fauves and that of Münch — not omitting Gauguin and Van Gogh.
- 28 - Quoted by Robert BEACHBOARD, *la Trinité Maudite*, Paris, 1952, p. 28.

- 29 - Quoted by Robert BEACHBOARD, *op. cit.* p. 48.
- 30 - Quoted by Robert BEACHBOARD, *op. cit.* p. 119.
- 31 - Page 167 of volume II of *Peintres célèbres*, published by B. Dorival, Paris, 1954.
- 32 - A. BARR, *Matisse, his Art and his Public*, New York 1951, p. 192.
- 33 - Quoted by Georges DUTHUIT, *Les Fauves*, Geneva 1949, p. 58.
- 34 - *Ibid*, p. 116.
- 35 - *Ibid*, p. 72.
- 36 - She exhibited Matisse, Marquet, and Flandrin there for the first time in 1902; Puy, Manguin, Camoin, Friesz and Dufy in 1903.
- 37 - Page 74 of volume II, published in Paris in 1944.
- 38 - *Art et Décoration*, 1905, vol. II, p. 198.
- 39 - André GIDE, *Promenade au Salon d'Automne*, in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1905, vol. II, pp. 483-484.
- 40 - *Art et Décoration*, 1906, vol. II, p. 141. Paul JAMOT in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1906, vol. II, p. 480, likewise speaks of "The room in which young men gather round the changing and disconcerting M. Henri Matisse."
- 41 - M. GUILLEMENOT, *The Salon d'Automne*, in *Art et les Artistes*, October 1906-March 1907, p. 306.
- 42 - *Ibid*, p. 296.
- 43 - *Ibid*, p. 305.
- 44 - By establishing these facts and this chronology we are able to correct the errors which have frequently been committed concerning the date of Vauxcelles' exclamation, and, as a corollary to it, the baptism of Fauvism. Joseph Emile Muller had dated them from the Salon d'Automne of 1905 (*Le Fauvisme*, Paris 1956, p. 1), Jean Leymarie from the Salon des Indépendants of 1906 (*Dictionnaire de la Peinture moderne*, Paris 1954, p. 100). I myself, from the Indépendants of 1905 (*Étapes de la peinture française contemporaine*, Paris 1944, vol. II, p. 76). It was reading A. Barr's *Matisse, his Art and his Public*, New York 1951, p. 53 and p. 531 which enabled me to rectify this inaccuracy.
- 45 - Charles MALPEL, *Notes sur l'art d'aujourd'hui et peut-être de demain*, Paris-Toulouse 1910, vol. II, p. 153.
- 46 - *Ibid*, p. 154.
- 47 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- 48 - Maurice de VLAMINCK, *Tournant dangereux*.
- 49 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
- 50 - The expression is Jean PUY's, *Les Fauves*, G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- 51 - Quoted by J.-L. MULLER, *Le Fauvisme*, Paris 1956, p. 30-31.
- 52 - G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- 53 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- 54 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 79, 128, 165.
- 55 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *ibid.*, p. 65.
- 56 - Quoted by G. DUTHUIT, *ibid.*, p. 119.
- 57 - A. DERAINE, *Lettres à Vlaminck*, Paris 1955.
- 58 - It will be noticed that it exercised an important influence on foreign painting; Belgium (Wouters), Scandinavia (Matisse's studio was filled with Scandinavians when he was teaching at 56, rue de Sèvres, then Bd des Invalides in 1908 and 1911), etc. Its influence was paramount in Germany on the *Brücke* and *Blaue Reiter* movements.
- 59 - Which had already been exploited by the Nabis.
- 60 - Quoted from the *Mercure de France* of 16th October 1912, pp. 894-895.
- 61 - Quoted from the *Journal officiel de la République Française*, issue of 4th December 1912.
- 62 - Which also rejected André Lhote's *Bunch of Grapes*.
- 63 - It will be noted in this connection that it was the last occasion prior to 1920 that Braque appeared in a Paris Salon. Like all Kahnweiler's "nurselings", for a long time he gave these exhibitions a wide berth.
- 64 - It is the last he made in France before 1919. He likewise refused to appear in the Paris Salons.
- 65 - During the following years it won the adherence of Surville, Mondrian, Diego Rivera, Serge Férat, etc.

- 66 - With which one can compare the statement made by Gleizes and Metzinger : "The visible world becomes the real world only through the operation of the mind."
- 67 - "We refuse to exhaust ourselves seizing hold of the transitory present", the Cubist painters confess through their mouthpiece, Apollinaire.
- 68 - It is a different matter for those belonging to the Pre-Cubist period (1907-1908) which, on the contrary, seem to me to constitute one of the most characteristic expressions of their author, so wonderfully stimulated by the example of Negro art.
- 69 - It should be noted in this connection that one of the chief frequenters of the Puteaux meetings, Roger de La Fresnaye, pronounced a eulogy of him in December 1912 at one of the "dinners of the Passy Artists" and published it shortly afterwards in the review *Poème et Drame*, January 1913.
- 70 - Although Gleizes had known the celebrated Italian author since 1908.
- 71 - It was the occasion of a Futurist reception in Gleizes' studio where they met their French friends.
- 72 - Excluding orthodox Cubists such as Gris and Marcoussis and artists whose work shows only a superficial influence of Cézanne, such as Dumont and Agero.
- 73 - According to which, between the object and our eye there exists a relationship which assumes the form of a pyramid, the apex of the latter being in our eye and its base in the object.
- 74 - It found the same defenders as Cubism, and, in particular, the review *Montjoie* "the organ of French artistic imperialism" published from 1st February 1913 by Canudo.
- 75 - Hence an essential difference between this painting and that of the Futurists, the more confused dynamism of which seems to me of a baroque nature.
- 76 - Such works, painted in 1910, prove the futility of the pretensions of Boccioni and the Futurists who claimed to see a "distortion" of their own art in that of Delaunay.
- 77 - Quoted by GILLES DE LA TOURETTE, *Robert Delaunay*, Paris, 1950, p. 39.
- 78 - *Ibid*, p. 38.
- 79 - *Ibid*. p. 49,
- 80 - That is, therefore, at the same time as the Lithuanian Tchurlianis who is sometimes credited with the invention of abstract art.
- 81 - In his study on Léger, published on pages 170-171 of B. Dorival's *Les Peintres célèbres*, vol. II, Paris, 1954.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BLANCHARD, Maria (1881-1932).

Born, a hunchback, at Santander in Spain. Her father was Spanish; her mother had a French father and a Polish mother. She learned the principles of her art in Madrid under the painter Salas el Sotomayor. In 1908 she came to Paris, where she worked first at the Académie Vitti with Anglade and then with Van Dongen. In 1913 she went back to her own country where she led a difficult life. She returned to France in the spring of 1916 and joined her compatriot, Juan Gris, Metzinger and the sculptor Lipchitz at Loches. She had been loyal to Cubism for a long time without ever completely renouncing representational art, and any kind of abstract solution was always alien to her. After her return to Paris in 1919 she began to enjoy a success which interested, in turn, both Léonie and Paul Rosenberg. In her painting Maria Blanchard was able to render scenes taken from contemporary daily life in an idiom that combined highly personal nobility with a sense of the pathetic. She died in Paris on April 5th 1932.

BONNARD, Pierre (1867-1947).

Born on October 30th at Fontenay-aux-Roses (Seine). He studied law and art at the same time; the latter at the Académie Julian, where his fellow pupils included Vuillard, Roussel, Maurice Denis, Ranson and Valloton, and his masters were Bouguereau and Tony-Robert Fleury. He associated with Sérusier and belonged to the "Nabi" group from the beginning. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants and at Le Barc de Bouteville's gallery. After serving a period of time in the chambers of a deputy public prosecutor — where he scribbled drawings on the briefs — he found a means of following his true vocation. He was one of the founders of the *Revue Blanche* in 1891, exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery in 1896 and at Vollard's in the following years. In 1899 he took part in the "Homage to Odilon Redon" exhibition. His stage-designs for the Théâtre des Pontins of his brother-in-law, Claude Terrasse, book-illustrations, stained glass and posters occupy an important place among the works of his first period. He had his studio in the rue de Douai and spent the spring and summer at Montval, near Marly-le-Roi, or on his family estate of Grand Lemps in the Dauphiné which

inspired the paintings he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of 1903. An indefatigable traveller, he toured in Belgium, Holland, Germany and England. In 1910 he went to Spain, Tunis and Algeria. Once a devotee of grey tones in painting, he acquired from his time in Provence a taste for colour which he never lost, whether he was living in Le Cannet, Paris or Vernon. For more than half a century Bonnard worked unremittingly, never satisfied, retouching his works even after they were finished, producing innumerable distemper panels and paintings on cardboard, water colours, pencil drawings, etc. He died on January 23rd 1947 in his little house at Le Cannet.

BRAQUE, Georges.

Born on May 13th 1882 at Argenteuil. His father was a building-contractor. His family settled in Le Havre in 1890. While apprenticed to his father's trade, the young Georges obtained his first art training at the École des Beaux-Arts at Le Havre. At the age of twenty-two he came to Paris and attended the municipal classes in painting at les Batignolles and the Académie Humbert in the rue Rochechouart. He stayed with Friesz in Antwerp in 1906 and in the Ciotat arrondissement of Marseilles in 1907. At that time his allegiance was to Fauvism, and these early paintings at the Salon des Indépendants in 1907 proved a success. However, he did not hesitate to modify his initial manner by resolutely excluding violent tones from his palette and submitting lines and forms to a pseudo-geometrical discipline. The hanging committee of the Salon d'Automne of 1908 did not approve of this new idiom and vied with each other in rejecting all Braque's entries which Matisse — particularly the *Houses at L'Estaque* — saw as an accumulation of cubes. In his account of a Braque exhibition at Kahnweiler's some months later, Louis Vauxcelles was pleased to borrow the image and referred to "little cubes". The word caught on and passed into the French language. Two years later at L'Estaque Braque resolutely renounced all objective representation. From that period he became a close friend of Picasso. Every summer from 1911 to 1913 the two friends worked side by side at Céret and Sorgues in the south of France. The 1914 war brought their close collaboration to an end. Braque was called up,

and fought in Artois. He was seriously wounded in the head and discharged after a trepanning operation in 1917. When he started painting again, he proved less hostile to the representational element. While feeling free to return to a more abstract art after 1930, he employed a less arid design and no longer confined himself to still-lives but also painted nudes and landscapes. Braque has pursued his long career without showing any concern for his reputation. He has, however, won the fame he never solicited. His winning of the Carnegie Prize in 1939 was a brilliant inauguration to the imposing series of awards subsequently conferred throughout the world upon the master of *Homage to Bach*, while countless exhibitions have continued to show his work to a universal public.

CAMOIN, Charles.

Born in Marseilles on September 23rd 1879. He came of a family of house-painters who encouraged his vocation. In 1916 at the École des Beaux-Arts he entered Gustave Moreau's studio where he became a friend of Marquet. His military service took him to Aix-en-Provence where he had an opportunity of visiting Cézanne with whom he kept in contact and exchanged an important correspondence. From 1903 onwards he exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants and with the Fauves at the Salon d'Automne of 1905. During the winter of 1912-1913 he travelled to Morocco in the company of Matisse and Marquet and brought back canvases from Africa which he exhibited at Druet's on his return. During the war he was drafted to the camouflage section. It was then that he had a meeting with Renoir at Cagnes which made a deep impression on him. From that time on, his painting was clearly very much influenced by that of Renoir. In 1939 Camoin settled at Saint-Tropez where he remained throughout the duration of hostilities and only in 1944 did he decide to return to Paris where he led a very retired life. The Galerie Charpentier held an important exhibition of his work in December 1947.

CHABAUD, Auguste (1882-1955).

Born at Nîmes on October 3rd 1882. Died May 23rd 1955. After making the acquaintance of the Fauves and painting pictures in their spirit (*Le Moulin de la Galette*, Musée National d'Art Moderne) he retired to the South of France. From then on he lived at Graveson, working alone and sharing the life of the peasants. He succeeded in portraying the landscapes, the ploughmen, the markets and the country life of his "montagnette" with power

and emotion. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon d'Automne and the Tuileries. He also practised sculpture. He produced several books of poems which were quite traditional in form (*Poésie Pure*, *Peinture Pure*, *Le Taureau Sacré*) but also a story, *Le Tambour Gautier*, which is full of vigour and contains a very personal note.

DELAUNAY, Robert (1885-1941).

Born in Paris on April 12th 1885. Brought up among artists, he began painting very early. After his expulsion from lycées in Bourges and Paris he studied for two years at an academy of stage design in Belleville.

On his return from a visit to Brittany in 1905 he began the series of "towers", which was to be of such importance in his work, with *The Towers of Laon*, painted in a style influenced by Neo-Impressionism. *Saint-Séverin* and *The Towns* (1909), which bore the mark of Cézanne's aesthetic, preceded the first of the characteristic *Eiffel Tower* paintings, in which fragmentation is accentuated and forms are separated by light. In 1911 Delaunay contributed his *Eiffel Tower* to the Cubist exhibition in room 41 at the Salon des Indépendants. The following year he exhibited again at the Salon des Indépendants, with *The Tower of Paris* (Musée d'Art Moderne), held a one-man exhibition at Barbazanges' and painted *The Windows* which marks a decisive turning point in the development of his style, a return to contrasting colours in reaction against the dull colouring favoured by orthodox Cubism. Apollinaire was to call this type of painting "Orphic Cubism", a movement to which, among others, Sonia Terk, the future Mme Delaunay, contributed. In 1912-1913 appeared the first *Circular Forms* which gave rise in France to so-called "Non-Objective" painting. This technique aims at suppressing all exterior representation and any suggestion of the real and any geometrical figure. Colour becomes both form and subject and neither evokes descriptive or explanatory interpretation, nor suggests literary or symbolic meaning. Discharged from the army, Delaunay travelled in Spain and Portugal during the rest of the war. He designed sets for *Cléopâtre* for Serge Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, and mural decorations for the San Francisco Exhibition. In 1925 he took part in the International Cubist Exhibition. Subsequently, from 1930 onwards, he introduced the Time-Rhythm element into his work and arranged his disks in accordance with a deliberate convention, with systematic repetitions, calculated intervals etc. He decorated the Palais du Chemin de Fer and the Palais de l'Air at the 1937 International Exhibition, held in Paris. Robert Delaunay died on October 25th 1941.

DELAUNAY, Sonia.

Sonia Terk was born in the Ukraine in 1885, and brought up in St. Petersburg. She decided to adopt an artist's career after first considering devoting herself to science. She spent two years in Germany and went to Paris in 1904 where she entered the Académie de la Palette and where among others, Ozenfant was her fellow pupil. At this time she came under the influence of Van Gogh and sought a means of expression in intensity of colour. She exhibited at Wilhelm Uhde's gallery. In 1910 she married Robert Delaunay and for a time was influenced by him. Her work was not limited to painting and included bookbinding. She exhibited books and pictures in Berlin. In Spain and Portugal where she travelled from 1915 onwards she added ceramics to her work, painted abstract water-colours and designed the costumes for Diaghilev's ballet, *Cléopâtre*, for which Delaunay designed the sets. Back in France she took up dress-designing, which she practised between 1922 and 1924 and had the idea of decorating dress and scarf materials with abstract ornaments. "No more representational themes, no more bouquets, garlands or butterflies, but a serene yet pleasing architecture of geometrical forms arranged in an easily perceptible rhythm" (André Lhote). Sonia Delaunay executed two vast compositions at the Paris Exhibition of 1937. Her husband died in 1941. During the Occupation she stayed at Grasse. After the war she contributed to the founding of the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, devoted to abstract painting. In 1953 a retrospective exhibition of her work was held at the Galerie Bing.

DENIS, Maurice (1870-1943).

Born at Granville on November 25th 1870. After a brilliant career at the Lycée Condorcet he went to the École des Beaux-Arts for a short time. He was attending classes at the Académie Julian in 1888 when Paul Sérusier returned from a stay in Brittany and set himself up as Gauguin's apostle. Convinced by this revelation, Maurice Denis lost no time in becoming the spiritual head of the young group who were to be called variously "Cloisonnists", "Synthetists", "Neo-Traditionists" and "Symbolists" but who, in private, affected the name of "Nabis" (the "prophets", the "inspired"). In 1889 Maurice Denis exhibited with the Nabis at the Café Volpini and in the following year made his first appearance at the Salon des Indépendants. He discovered the "Nazarenes" in Germany in 1896 and the Italian Primitives in Florence. On several subsequent occasions Rome was to open up quite different horizons to him, which

contributed as much as Cézanne's influence towards the formation of his final stylised idiom. Among Maurice Denis' various works, mural decorations occupy a place of paramount importance. There are many, but one might mention in particular *Saint Louis delivering Judgment* (Church of Saint-Louis de Vincennes) and the ceilings of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Maurice Denis was profoundly Christian in spirit and with Georges Desvallières founded the Ateliers de l'Art Sacré in 1919. He passed a life of tranquil retirement at St Germain en-Laye and died in 1943 as the result of a lorry accident. He had a remarkable talent as a writer and left various studies which were collected in two books, *Théories* (1912) and *Nouvelles Théories* (on modern art and sacred art, 1922).

DERAIN, André (1880-1954).

Born at Chatou on June 10th 1880. The sound education he received at the Collège Chaptal did not deflect him from his artistic vocation. After working at Chatou with a certain Jacomin, Derain entered Carrière's studio, where he became a friend of Matisse. In 1899 he met Vlaminck and the two of them formed the "School of Chatou". At Collioure in 1905 in the company of Matisse, Derain painted some violently "Fauve" canvases. He soon renounced this tendency, however, and his work in the following years revealed his new predilection for austerity and solid composition. He had virtually become a follower of Cubism. He was influenced in the direction of archaism by the Primitives of Siena and Ferrara which had been a revelation to him in 1912. The 1914 war, during which, though called up, he continued to produce drawings, paintings and even sculpture, using whatever materials came to hand, put an end to his "Gothic" manner. After 1920, the South of France and Italy, where he painted a great deal, influenced his art in the direction of a kind of classicism. This was made manifest in 1930 by an important exhibition of his work arranged at Paul Guillaume's. Derain executed many stage designs and, using various graphic processes, illustrated the *Satyricon*, *Pantagruel* and the *Contes of La Fontaine* and other books. He was knocked down by a car and died on September 2nd 1954.

DESVALLIERES, Georges (1861-1950).

Born in Paris on March 14th 1861. At the age of eighteen he became the pupil of Élie Delaunay who was in due course to show his disciple's work to Gustave Moreau. The latter took an interest in the young painter and became

his veritable master. Desvallières made his début with some success at the Salon d'Automne. He was attracted by religious subjects from the start. Following the example of Maurice Denis, he devoted himself to decorative painting. About the year 1910 his religious faith, always latent, became a passionate reality. Since 1904 he had devoted himself not only to sacred subjects but themes intended to inspire a horror of vice, and, when necessary, he did not hesitate to go to the Moulin Rouge for his inspiration. In a manifesto he proposed to inaugurate a school of painting under the protection of Our Lady. He lost a son in the 1914 war and turned more and more towards mysticism. With Maurice Denis he founded the Ateliers d'Art Sacré in 1919. He decorated many churches with his work and became president of the Salon d'Automne. Georges Desvallières died in 1950.

DUCHAMP, Marcel.

Born at Blainville near Rouen in 1887. His father, who was a solicitor, had six children, four of whom were to become well-known artists: one, Gaston, is the painter, Jacques Villon. Marcel Duchamp was for a time a librarian at Sainte-Geneviève, a sinecure which allowed him the leisure to draw and paint. At this time he drew his inspiration from Impressionists, but his own personal vision soon asserted itself. In 1912 he painted his most famous canvas: *Nude Descending the Staircase* (Philadelphia Museum). This picture was the first Cubist study of movement. "In fact", writes H.P. Roché (*Dictionary of Contemporary Painters*, Hazon, 1955), "it is a series of five simplified, integrated human forms, descending a winding staircase with a compelling rhythm and expression". Marcel Duchamp was of a complete independence of spirit, entirely disinterested, sometimes subsisting on the proceeds of a few French lessons. He cared for hardly anything beyond his game of chess, and produced no more than a score of works which were sold to select friends. Some of them, for example *The Bride Disrobed by her Unmarried Friends*, a panel of about ten feet high which he worked on from 1915 until 1923, were painted on slabs of glass. This was the period when, with Picabia, he contributed to the launching of the Dadaist Movement. He was also intimately connected with Surrealism, to which his many strange investigations show his affinity. Marcel Duchamp has been living now in New York for many years. He has had the satisfaction of seeing his most important work assembled in the Philadelphia Museum.

DUFY, Raoul (1877-1953).

Born July 3rd 1877 into a comparatively humble family. After a schooling which was soon curtailed, he was put into commerce. He attended evening classes at the École des Beaux-Arts in Le Havre. When his military service was finished, he was awarded a scholarship by his native town and entered Bonnat's studio at the École des Beaux-Arts. In 1901 he exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français and in 1902 at the Salon des Indépendants. In his early work he showed himself responsive to the influence of the Impressionists and Toulouse-Lautrec. The revelation of seeing a certain Matisse painting introduced him to Fauvism. In 1905 he took part in the Salon d'Automne. A trip to l'Estaque in Braque's company made him a follower of Cézanne. A stay at Munich with Friesz in 1909 accentuated his latest tendencies: more precise forms and a less brilliant palette. The examples of Lhote and Marchand increased his taste for experiments in construction which brought him still more close to the Cubists of this period. Neglected by his patrons, Dufy began to practise a great deal of wood-engraving. Having met the couturier, Poiret, in 1911, he set up a cloth decorating business where he printed his first wallpapers. Later he entered the silk manufacturing firm of Bianchini-Férier as a pattern-designer. After the 1914 war he abandoned the medium of wood-engraving for lithography and etching. From 1922 onwards he suddenly adopted a looser composition and a more summary idiom which are peculiarly his own. He was also to be attracted by ceramics, tapestry and stage design. In 1952 the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva organized the most important exhibition of his work which has been held up to date. Dufy was stricken by a partial paralysis of the hands but after taking a course of treatment in the United States which enabled him to paint again, settled at Forcalquier where he died on March 23rd, 1953.

FERAT, (Serge GASTREBZOFF).

Born on May 28th 1881 in Moscow of a noble family. He studied law at Kiev. In 1901 he settled in Paris to devote himself to painting. He attended classes at the Académie Julian and exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français — receiving an honourable mention in 1906. At the Salon des Indépendants under the pseudonym of Roudniev, he also exhibited works inspired by the painters of the Italian quattrocento and admired by Maurice Denis. He was a collector, discovered Douanier Rousseau in 1908 and bought about a dozen of his

paintings. In 1911 he came to know Picasso who introduced him to Apollinaire, whose intimate friend he became and who supplied him with his pseudonym of Férat. He also saw Braque on frequent occasions. He remained faithful to Cubism and exhibited works painted in this spirit at the Salon des Indépendants in 1910, 1911 and 1912. In 1913 he bought up the review, *Soirées de Paris* and turned it into one of the most active champions of avant-garde art. A volunteer in the 1914 war, he became a male nurse at the Italian hospital in Paris, where he tended Apollinaire who got him to design sets and costumes for the *Mamelles de Tirésias* but failed to persuade him to do likewise for *Couleur du Temps*. Ruined financially by the Russian Revolution, neglected by the Paris élite who had flocked to the receptions he gave before and after the 1914 war, discouraged by the hostility of critics and the indifference of dealers — alone Level exhibited his works, with those of Max Jacob in 1954 — and aided only by rare connoisseurs such as H.P. Roché, Férat destroyed a great number of his works and lived to himself, mixing only with a few artists — Survage, Gleizes, Delaunay etc. — and reserving his work for rare occasions: in 1938 at Maratier's, at the Galerie de Beaune, in 1953 at the Cubist Exhibition in the Musée d'Art Moderne. However, more and more interest is being taken in his work which is full of poetry, fantasy and charm. The State has commissioned three cartoons for tapestries to be made at Beauvais and more and more connoisseurs are being attracted by this rare and exquisite work of genuine originality.

FLANDRIN, Jules (1871-1947).

Born at Corens near Grenoble on July 9th 1871. At the École des Beaux-Arts he attended Gustave Moreau's class, the nursery of the future Fauves. He remained much more traditional himself: he painted still-lives and landscapes inspired by his native Dauphiné and his travels in Italy — the Musée d'Art Moderne possesses one of the most important works, *The Road to the Grande-Chartreuse*. He executed figure compositions in the spirit of Maurice Denis. He exhibited regularly at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, as well as the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. He died in Paris in May 1947.

FRIESZ, Othon (1879-1949).

Born in Le Havre on February 6th, 1879. He was still at a lycée when he obtained permission to attend evening classes at the École des Beaux-Arts in Le Havre. There he had Charles-Marie Lhuillier for professor and he met

Dufy, resulting in a friendship which was to last for the rest of their lives. A scholarship from his home town allowed him to continue his art training in Paris at Bonnat's studio and to hold animated discussions with the pupils from the neighbouring studio of Gustave Moreau. The result of these was the movement destined to be called Fauvism in which he himself was to be involved. Friesz even ventured further, namely, as far as the fringes of Cubism, during the important period of his visit to Portugal in 1911. But he remained within those limits and forged a personal, expressive and very marked style which is easily distinguished and remains common both to his *Provençal* landscapes and those of his native Normandy. Friesz died suddenly on January 10th 1949.

GLEIZES, Albert.

Born in Paris on December 8th, 1881. While still adolescent he was apprenticed to his father, an industrial designer, and began to paint without receiving any formal training. He came to know the Symbolist poets, Paul Fort and Émile Verhaeren and met the future creators of Cubism, the painters Le Fauconnier, Léger and Metzinger and the writers Apollinaire and Roger Allard. His first landscapes of Gascony and Picardy are painted in the Impressionist manner. He turned to Cubism about 1909 and was one of those who figured in Room 41 at the Salon des Indépendants of 1911 and thus took part in the first collective Cubist manifestation. From 1914 onwards his pictures become less and less representational. He executed a series of compositions based on the cities of America and in 1924 painted three panels for the Paris Faculty of Pharmacy which were not set up. During the years 1926 and 1927 he painted canvases to which he attributed a religious significance. 1934 saw the end of what he called his "experiments in rhythmical mechanics". He discovered the role of cadence in conjunction with those of colour and rhythm. As a theorist of Cubism, Gleizes was particularly fascinated by morphology and the history of the plastic arts. He travelled widely in Europe and America. We are indebted to him for a considerable number of books and articles. His literary works include a book he wrote in collaboration with Metzinger entitled *On Cubism* (1912) which was the first theoretical account devoted to this school. He executed mural compositions, working as one of a team with Villon and Delaunay. In 1937 he took part in the second aesthetic congress at the Sorbonne where he spoke on: "two ways of stating the human problem: Cubism and Realism". In 1939 he settled at Saint-Rémy (Provence) where he

remained during the war. In his recent works he has achieved a sense of equilibrium that is true classicism.

GRIS, Jose Victoriano GONZALES, known as *Juan* (1887-1927).

Born in Madrid on March 23rd 1887 of a Castilian father and an Andalusian mother. He received a scientific education and was admitted to the Madrid School of Arts and Manufactures. The financial ruin of his family forced him to call a halt to his studies. He drew comic drawings for newspapers for a livelihood. At the same time he practised painting and frequented the most advanced Spanish artistic circles. Attracted by the ever-increasing fame of his compatriot, Picasso, Juan Gris came to Paris at the age of nineteen, began by installing himself at the "Bateau Lavoir" (See p. 73) at 13 rue Ravignon and gleaned a meagre income from the drawings he contributed to the *Assiette au Beurre*, the *Charivari*, the *Témoin* etc. Converted to Cubism by Picasso, Juan Gris never deserted this aesthetic formula. He started by exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants in 1912. His first works belong to Analytical Cubism, which aims at representing all the facets of an object through a multiplicity of viewpoints. Subsequently the young painter became the originator of synthetic Cubism, an attempt to "give concrete form to the abstract" and eliminate all processes of imitation. In 1920 Juan Gris was taken ill with pleurisy and passed the summer at Bandol. In the spring of 1923 Kahnweiler organised a big exhibition of his work. In 1924 Juan Gris took up, amplified and realised the first draft of a stage design for Diaghilev's Russian Ballet which he had left unfinished. His health remained poor. In vain did Juan Gris spend the winters of 1925 and 1926 in the south of France in the hope of restoring it. Returning home to Boulogne-sur-Seine after a stay at Puget-Théniers, he succumbed to an attack of uraemia on May 11th 1927.

GUERIN, Charles (1875-1939).

Born at Sens on February 21st 1875. A pupil of Gustave Moreau at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he first exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1897. Though he took only modest liberties with his palette — he cannot be ranked with the Fauves — he was nevertheless considered revolutionary at the time. He can be counted among the artists of the "third party": he always kept contacts with his former comrades who had become Fauves without daring to follow them, but himself willingly taking a stand against academism; Guérin

greatly admired Cézanne and made copies of his paintings. His figures were much influenced by the poetry of Francis Jammes and are an attractive blend of realism and romanticism. He died in Paris on March 19th 1939.

HAYDEN, Henri.

Born in Warsaw on December 24th 1885. After a sound education he entered the École Polytechnique, attended classes at the École des Beaux-Arts in his native town and finally decided to devote himself entirely to an artistic career. In 1907 he came to live in Paris, where he still remains. The following year he entered the "La Palette" Academy of Art where Charles Guérin and Georges Desvallières taught. After 1911 he exhibited works at the Galerie Druet conceived in a style in which Cézanne's influence can be detected. A little later Hayden was converted to Cubism and linked up with Léonce Rosenberg. But subsequently he returned to a more realist art. He became a naturalized Frenchman and exhibited at the Salon des Tuileries. One of his canvases figured in the official exhibition "100 masterpieces from the Musée d'Art Moderne" at Amsterdam and Brussels in 1942.

KUPKA, François (1871-1957).

Born on September 23rd 1871 at Opocno (Bohemia). He entered the Prague School of Fine Arts at an early age. He was in Vienna in 1891 and in 1895 he settled in Paris where he illustrated a whole series of works including a scientific résumé of Élisée Reclus, the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus and Élie Faure's translation of the *Song of Songs*. By 1906 his ideal in painting was no longer satisfied by mere appearances: and imagination played an essential part, particularly in so far as it endowed colour with a life independent of reality. After 1910, this led him to paint canvases of an essentially abstract nature such as the *Fugue in Red and Blue*. The year 1913 saw him taking part in the meetings of the "Golden Section" and proclaiming the right of painters and sculptors to produce abstract compositions made up of invented elements as architects do. During the 1914 war Kupka enlisted as a private soldier in the French army and later became an officer in the Czech Legion. After the war he continued his uncompromising experiments without succeeding in attracting much attention. It was not until after the second world war that a real interest was taken in his works in Czechoslovakia where an important retrospective exhibition was arranged in honour of his seventy-fifth birthday, and a Kupka museum was founded in his native country. He died in Paris in June 1957.

LA FRESNAYE, Noël-Roger de (1885-1925).

Born at Le Mans on July 11th 1885 into an ancient and noble family of Norman origin, whose ancestors included Vauquelin, the author of the *Art of Poetry* and the Epicurean of Les Yveteaux. He received a sound classical education. In 1903 his schooling was finished and he entered the Académie Julian, where he remained until 1905. Segonzac, Lotiron, Luc-Albert Moreau and Boussingault were fellow pupils with whom he was to form a lasting friendship. In 1908, on the advice of Paul Véra, La Fresnaye attended the Académie Ranson, where the teaching of Maurice Denis and Sérusier first opened his eyes to the art of Gauguin and Cézanne. On his return from a visit to Italy in 1910, he heard about the experiments of Braque and Picasso. During the following years, in company with the Cubists at the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon d'Automne and the "Golden Section", he exhibited canvases which showed his response to the new influence, without any loss of his own, very personal style. Despite his discharge from the army, he volunteered as a private at the outbreak of hostilities and ended up as an officer. At the front in 1917 he produced a series of drawings and water colours intended as illustrations to a poem by Cocteau which did not appear because of publishing difficulties. After a gas attack in 1918 La Fresnaye was sent back to base. He was treated in one sanatorium after another, but never recovered from the pneumonia he contracted on the battlefield. He developed tuberculosis and ended his days at Grasse on November 27th 1925. In his last years he lacked the strength to work on large canvases but he produced a large number of drawings and sanguines which were, in the best sense, in the purest classical tradition.

LAPRADE, Pierre (1875-1931).

Born at Narbonne on July 25th 1875. His real name was Coffinhal-Laprade. He frequented Bourdelle's studio at Montauban before making a false start at the École des Beaux-Arts. Rather than submit to the official teaching with which he was completely disillusioned, he spent his time making innumerable copies at the Louvre. He exhibited for the first time at the Salon des Indépendants in 1901. Several years later Ambroise Vollard bought up Laprade's studio and helped to launch him. Italy, where he stayed on three occasions between 1908 and 1914, exercised a great influence on the artist's development. In the war he was drafted to the camouflage section. On his return to civil life he executed stage designs

for *Pygmalion* at the Théâtre des Arts and for the Swedish Ballet's *Tombeau de Couperin* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. He illustrated numerous works including the *Fêtes Galantes*, and the *Embarcation for Cythera* by Bourgerel. Although temporarily attracted by the Fauves, Laprade quickly returned to tradition, to his 'awareness of reality adorned with the charms of orderliness' (René Huyghe). He became as attached to the poetry of the French countryside, its crops and flowers, as to that of an old porcelain vase with faded colours.

LAURENCIN, Marie (1885-1956).

Born on October 31st 1885 in Paris. After going to school at the Lycée Lamartine, she studied for the École de Sévres while attending evening classes in drawing at the Ville de Paris school. Subsequently she entered the Académie Humbert. It was during the period when she published her first poems under the name of Louise Lalanne that Clovis Sagot mentioned her to Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire. She then lived in the atmosphere of the Cubist circle. She took part in the discussions at the "Bateau-Lavoir", (see p. 73) painting a self-portrait surrounded by *Apollinaire and his Friends*, but she did not allow her aesthetic theories to be directly influenced by them, though they possibly account for the simplified stylisation of her heavily powdered figures, dressed in gauzy clothes of pastel shades. Marie Laurencin illustrated many books. She died on June 8th 1956.

LE FAUCONNIER, Henri (1881-1946).

Born at Hesdin (Pas-de-Calais) in 1881. He came to live in Paris in 1901 and entered the Académie Julian five years later, where he worked in the same studio as Segonzac, Boussingault and La Fresnaye. In 1908 and 1909 at Ploumanach in Brittany he painted rocky landscapes and peasants in costume in a solidly constructional style which anticipated his future allegiance to Cubism. In 1911 he took an active part in arranging the exhibition in Room 41 at the Salon des Indépendants which grouped all the Cubists together and exhibited there himself. In the following year he became head of a studio at the Académie de la Palette. At the declaration of war he was in Holland. He was discharged and remained in the Netherlands.

After 1913 he broke free from Cubism and developed expressionistic experiments inspired by the gothic art of the north for which he had developed a passion prior to 1914. His expressionism exercised an influence on several Dutch and Belgian artists. Le Fauconnier returned

to France in 1920, gradually abandoned his expressionist manner and after 1925 made austerity his aim. The man whose friends had nicknamed him "the wonder-man" died in January 1946 in undeserved oblivion.

LEGER, Fernand (1881-1955).

Born at Argentan (Orne) on February 4th 1881, the son of a cattle-breeder. In 1900 after serving an apprenticeship of several years with a Caen architect, Léger worked in Paris as an architect's draughtsman. He was refused admission by the École des Beaux-Arts but accepted by the École des Arts Décoratifs at the same time, and entered the studios of Gérôme and then of Gabriel Ferrier as a private pupil. Following the example of other occupants of "La Ruche" where he had his quarters, he earned his living by retouching photographs. He returned from a trip to Corsica in 1905 with some canvases in a markedly Impressionist style, which he soon abandoned for a manner dominated by geometrical forms. In 1910 he participated in the Salon d'Automne and the Salon des Indépendants. Two years later he held his first exhibition at Kahnweiler Gallery. Through Kahnweiler he learned of the innovations of Braque and Picasso. Léger was called up in 1914 and discharged in 1917 and came back from the war convinced that machinery and its component parts have a plastic beauty which it is the artist's business to turn to magnificent account. From this time on he transcribed in his daring language — which never gives undue emphasis to the variety of materials — the image of our industrial civilisation, in the midst of which people devoid of all sentimental significance seem like automata. After a passing incursion into the art of the cinema with *Mechanical Ballet*, a film without a scenario where moving objects take the place of characters, Léger returned to painting. His "dynamic" period, when he sought to give the illusion of movement, was followed by his "static" period when he denied himself this. He went to New York in 1931 and settled to live in the United States in 1940. The Americans were his most appreciative public. Faithful to an apparently constant style, he had recourse to the most varied media of expression: mosaics, stained glass and polychrome ceramics. A short time before his sudden death on his farm at Gif-sur-Yvette (Seine-et-Oise) on August 17th 1955, he had completed designs for mural decorations for the UNO building in New York. A big retrospective exhibition of Fernand Léger's work at which more than a hundred of his pictures were assembled, was held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs from April to June 1956.

LHOTE, André.

Born on July 5th 1885 at Bordeaux. He was apprenticed to a sculptor-decorator in 1898. He spent ten years with him while attending classes in ornamental sculpture at the École des Beaux-Arts in his home town and began meantime to paint on his own. At the age of twenty-one he definitely gave up wood-carving in favour of painting. In 1906 at the Salon des Indépendants and in the following year at the Salon d'Automne he exhibited canvases painted under Gauguin's influence which were reminiscent of frescoes of Saint-Savin. In 1910 Lhote held his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Druet and soon afterwards came under the decisive influence of the art of Cézanne, which was to give direction to all his work, and took part in the Cubist movement but without ever completely sacrificing the appearances of the real world which he was content to "geometrize". The year 1918 marks his début as a critic in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. A very energetic teacher, he has published many books on aesthetics and numerous didactic treatises of which the *Treatise on Landscape* and *Figure-Drawing* are available in English (published A. Zwemmer). From 1918 to 1920 he taught at the Académie Moderne and in the following year at the Académie Anderson. In 1921 he founded an Academy in the rue d'Odessa, in Paris and subsequently even gathered pupils in the summer at Mirmande, where he spent the summer season. He has given many lectures in France and abroad. In 1943 an important exhibition of his work was held at the Galerie Goya in Bordeaux.

MAILLOL, Aristide (1861-1944).

Born at Banyuls-sur-Mer (Pyrénées-Orientales), on December 8th 1861. After going to school at the Lycée de Perpignan he took up painting before devoting himself to sculpture. He arrived in Paris in 1882 and followed the art courses of Gérôme and Cabanel successively at the École des Beaux-Arts. At the same time he was making copies of the works of Puvis de Chavannes and discovering the art of Gauguin which proved a great eye-opener to him. He was a faithful follower of the master of Pont-Aven. He gives less the impression of wanting to be a slavish imitator of nature than of submitting voluntarily to an observance of the laws of painting, and this his initial attempts, inspired by Pissarro, had in no way allowed him to achieve. He thus attained a veritable decorative grandeur. At Banyuls he ran a small tapestry workshop and for the Théâtre des Marionnettes, created by Maurice Bouchor, he painted sets which included *La Dévotion de*

Saint André. Maillol did not become a sculptor until his forties. He died at Banyuls on September 24th 1944.

MANGUIN, Henri (1874-1943).

Born in Paris on March 23rd 1874. He entered Gustave Moreau's studio in 1894. He exhibited at the Galerie Berthe Weill in 1902 and 1904 and at the Salon des Indépendants in 1903. Though he took part in the Fauve movement, he eschewed any form of violent expression. Manguin's work is indeed characterized by a complete absence of impetuosity. The clear tones of his palette never cease to please, the lines of his drawing are always harmoniously ordered. The South of France, where he passed the greater part of his life as a painter, failed to convert him to any excesses of colour. Manguin died at Saint-Tropez, on December 25th 1943.

MARCOUSSIS, Louis (1883-1941).

His real name was Louis Markous. He was born in Warsaw on November 14th 1883. In 1901 he attended the School of Fine Arts in Cracow, and in 1903 Jules Lefèvre's studio in Paris. The following year he came under the influence of Impressionism, but he shed this after a visit to Spain. In 1907 he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne. Subsequently he felt very attracted by Braque who introduced him to Picasso, and he took part in the Cubist movement. Guillaume Apollinaire named him after a village near Monthéry. Marcoussis joined the French Army in 1914 and went through the whole war and he finished up as an artillery officer. In 1920 he exhibited at *Der Sturm* in Berlin and in the following years at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon des Tuileries. During a visit to the United States in 1933 he exhibited at Knoedler's in New York and at the Chicago Art Club. He died at Cusset on October 22nd 1941.

MARINOT, Maurice.

Born at Troyes in 1882. He began as a painter, worked with the Fauves for a time and first made a name at the Salon d'Automne of 1905: where he appeared in 1906 with Camoin, Derain, Van Dongen, Dufy, Friesz, Manguin, Marquet, Matisse, Puy, Valtat and Vlaminck. (The Musée National d'Art Moderne possesses one of the most important works of his Fauve period, called *Young Woman with her Child*). He exhibited with them at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne until 1919. But from 1911 onwards he devoted himself principally to his experiments as a

master glassblower. He wanted, as he said, to create with his own breath, "sculptures in water and architecture of quality modelled in incandescent matter". In 1938 he was to close down his glassworks in Bar-sur-Aube. He then returned to painting, developing the work of his early years. In 1944 his studio at Troyes was destroyed in a fire.

MARQUET, Albert (1875-1947).

Born in Bordeaux, on March 27th 1875. When he had completed his secondary school studies he entered the École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Subsequently he became a pupil of Cormon and Aimé Morot at the École des Beaux-Arts and in 1897 worked under Gustave Moreau. During the months before the Exhibition of 1900 he earned his bread and butter by doing stucco work on the Grand-Palais. He exhibited for the first time in 1901 at the Salon des Indépendants. His early work shows the influence of Van Gogh and Cézanne without any sacrifice of personal idiom. He took part in the Futurist movement but did not swear allegiance to any group and before long invented his own concise style, schematic drawing, and his way of juxtaposing large, imperceptibly modulated areas of colour. From the flats he successively rented on the quai Saint-Michel and the quai de Conti he discovered those characteristic views which plunge down on to the shores of the Seine and became his favourite theme. But far from limiting himself to these horizons, he was indefatigable in transporting his easel from Egypt to Norway, from the Grisons to Tangiers and from Collioure to Laghouat, indefatigable in his endeavours to capture the atmosphere and light of each particular place and season. The permanent success which he achieved round about the year 1910 guaranteed this tireless traveller the financial independence which enabled him to indulge his taste. He also painted a small number of nudes and portraits. Marquet died in Paris in June 1947.

MATISSE, Henri (1869-1954).

Born at Le Cateau-Cambrésis (Nord) on December 31st 1869. He attended the Lycée de Saint-Quentin, studied law in Paris and began life as a lawyer's clerk at Saint-Quentin. The reading of a *Treatise on Painting* and frequent visits to museums made him aware of a vocation whose existence he did not suspect. He painted his first picture in 1890. After a disappointing period with Bouguereau and Robert Fleury at the École des Beaux-Arts which he entered in 1893, Gustave Moreau's teaching left a deep impression on him. Matisse began by

exhibiting at the Société Nationale des Artistes Français in 1896, which did not prevent him shortly afterwards, in 1898, from moving towards Impressionism under the influence of Pissarro. He experimented a great deal, studied figure painting with Camère and tried his hand at sculpture in 1900. After using a more or less Neo-Impressionist technique for a very brief period, he gave full value to colour in the works he painted at Collioure in 1904-1905. The canvases of Matisse, exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of 1905 side by side with those of Rouault, Derain, Marquet, Vlaminck, Friesz and Dufy, showed him to be the leader of "Fauvism". In the *Grande Revue* in 1908 he published a manifesto which was destined to create a remarkable impression. In it he advocated sacrificing objective significance to the feeling for the coloured arabesque. Two journeys to Morocco, in respectively 1911 and 1913, were, in an unexpected manner, to turn him away from violent colour. For a time until he found his own idiom he surrendered to the attraction of Cubism. He settled at Nice in 1917. From then on he remained permanently in love with a balanced art, that dispensed a tranquillity, whose justification and end lay not in its subject but in itself. Grand Laureate of the Pittsburgh International Exhibition and invited to join the hanging committee for the Exhibition the following year, Matisse went to the United States in 1930 before making a prolonged cruise round Oceania. In 1937 he executed for Dr. Barnes at Merion (U.S.A.) a large mural decoration called *The Dance* in which the figures are over ten feet high. In 1939 he settled in the valley of the Var. In January 1941 he underwent a very serious but successful surgical operation. Important exhibitions of his works of all periods were held at the Salon d'Automne in 1944, in London in 1945, at the Palace of the Popes at Avignon in 1947, and at the Musée d'Art Moderne in 1956. The Dominican Chapel at Vence (Alpes-Maritimes) which was inaugurated in 1951, constitutes the most perfect example of the art that generated tranquillity, which at the end of his life, as in his prime, it was Matisse's aim to realise. He died at Nice on November 3rd 1954.

METZINGER, Jean (1883-1956).

Born at Nantes on June 24th 1883. He began painting in his youth while continuing to attend school. His initial success decided him to persevere in his vocation. In Paris he was repelled by the training on strictly classical lines which was meted out to him

at various academies. He refused to be persuaded that a picture should be limited to representing an object; it should, he thought, aim at producing unexpected delight from the combination of forms and colours. The logical consequence of this way of looking at things was to lead Metzinger to approach in turn the Neo-Impressionists, the Fauves and, from 1907, the Cubists. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1911, took part in the reunion of the "Golden Section" and, with Albert Gleizes, published the first theoretical work devoted to the new aesthetic system, "*On Cubism*" (1912). Discharged from the army in 1915, he made a contract with Léonie Rosenberg. He stayed in the Loches area with Juan Gris, Lipschitz and Maria Blanchard (1917-1918) and returned to Paris after the war. He created a style that always eschewed abstraction and moved deliberately in the direction of a "constructive realism". He died in Paris in November 1956.

MODIGLIANI, Amadeo (1884-1920).

Born at Leghorn on July 12th 1884 of a Jewish family. A local painter had taught him early in life the rudiments of painting, but his artistic experience came to him above all through his study of the great masterpieces of the past. Modigliani came to Paris in 1906 and settled in Montmartre where he mixed with the group of artists who were close friends of Picasso's. At that time he was in extreme financial straits, and he subsisted solely on the proceeds of sketches sold at the café-terraces. He took refuge in alcohol and narcotics and sank into a profound despair, hints of which can be discerned in his pictures, that owe something both to the memory of Toulouse-Lautrec and Steinlen. In 1909 he practised sculpture for a period but quickly returned to his brushes, with the firm intention, this time, of developing an idiom of his own and imposing systematic modulation on form. When war was declared in 1914, he considered enlisting. His socialist convictions prevented him from carrying out this intention. The figures he produced from now on gave him the opportunity of developing his style, a style to which henceforward he remained steadfastly faithful. The love of Jeanne Hébuterne and the friendship of the poet Zborowski, both equally devoted to serving his cause with unswerving loyalty, helped their protégé finally to obtain a success which was unfortunately short lived. Modigliani died at the Hôpital de la Charité on January 25th 1920, a victim of alcoholism and consumption.

PICABIA, Francis (1878-1953).

Born in Paris on January 5th 1875 of a Spanish father and a French mother, he adopted French nationality. From 1897 to 1903 he attended the École des Arts Décoratifs. In 1903 he began to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants and took part in the Salon d'Automne from its foundation. His style was first influenced by Impressionism but from 1908 on showed the influence of the Cubist manner. About 1911 he joined the members of the "Golden Section" and soon after approached "Orphism". No artist was more versatile, none showed himself more inclined to burn one day what he worshipped the day before. His whole career is a proof of this attitude. In 1917 in New York he came into contact with Marcel Duchamp and with him laid the foundations of what was to be the Dadaist movement. He founded the review entitled *291* which in the following year at Barcelona bore the name *391* and of which various numbers were subsequently to appear at intervals in Barcelona, New York and Paris. He broke with Dadaism at the same time as André Breton and in 1921 became the apostle of Surrealism. Three years later Picabia designed the sets and costumes for *Intermission* for the Swedish Ballet Company and exhibited with the Surrealists until he suddenly returned to figurative art. There have been three important exhibitions of his work as a whole, the first in 1930 at the Galerie Léonie Rosenberg, the others at the Salon des Surindépendants in 1945 and the Galerie Druet in January 1946. Francis Picabia died in Paris in 1953.

PICASSO, Pablo-Ruiz.

Born on October 25th 1881 at Malaga. His father was a drawing-master. Gifted with a talent as exceptional as it was precocious, Picasso was accepted at the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona, having completed in one day the subject which the candidates had been allotted a month to treat. Two years later with no more difficulty he won admission to the Madrid School of Fine Arts. In 1901 Picasso made his first visit to Paris. Berthe Weill bought three of his sketches. The newcomer then exhibited at Vollard's gallery. It was the beginning of the big camafieu paintings of his "Blue" period. In 1904 Picasso took up his quarters in Paris in the wooden house at 13, rue Ravignon, known as the "Bateau-Lavoir" (see p. 73). He had known Max Jacob since 1901 and was soon to meet Salmon, Jarry, Matisse, Apollinaire, Van Dongen, Derain and Braque. In 1905 at Gosol (Val d'Andorre) he embarked on his "pink" period. In 1908, under the

influence of Cézanne and the romanesque sculpture of Spain, he painted the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, a characteristic example of what was soon to be called Cubism. Shortly afterwards he produced sculpture inspired by Negro Art. From 1910 to 1914 Picasso was deeply involved in his period of "Analytical Cubism". Like Braque he did not hesitate to use other elements such as sand and collage in his painting experiments. In 1911 the first collective demonstration of Cubism was staged but Picasso did not take part. In 1917 he joined the Russian Ballet Company of Serge Diaghilev in Rome and painted sets and costumes for *Parade* which caused Apollinaire to speak of "sur-realism". The year 1920 saw the inauguration of his neo-classical period, 1923 the series of representational *Harlequins*, 1925 the period of violent distortion, 1931 a return to sculpture. Up till then Picasso had not exhibited in any French Salon. In 1936 a travelling exhibition of his work was shown in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. When the Spanish civil war broke out, he sided with the Republicans, and was appointed director of the Prado Museum. He painted *Guernica* which figured in the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition of 1937. His series of *Seated Women* dates from 1941. From August 1944 Picasso belonged to the Communist Party. In the same year he contributed seventy-four paintings and five pieces of sculpture to the Salon d'Automne. After 1947 at Vallauris (Alpes-Maritimes) he devoted himself to the art of ceramics. In 1953 he decorated a disused fourteenth century chapel near Vallauris with his *War and Peace* and between December 1954 and February 1955 he painted a series of fourteen variations on Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*. In Paris in 1955 a double exhibition took place simultaneously at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Bibliothèque Nationale, which was devoted to the paintings and engravings of Picasso, as considerable in number as in importance.

PUY, Jean.

Born at Roanne on November 8th 1876. In 1895 he entered the École des Beaux-Arts at Lyons as an architectural student. Only later on the advice of Tony Tollet did he turn to painting. He attended the Académie Julian in Paris and later the Académie Carrière where he met Matisse and Derain and struck up a friendship with them. He was at first influenced by Impressionism but was classed among the Fauves because he had exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1905 among artists whose excesses caused a scandal that year. In

point of fact — and in this respect he resembles his rivals Camoin and Manguin — his Fauvism was invariably restrained and his taste for bright colours, far from involving him in excesses, remained well under control throughout his career.

RANSON, Paul (1864-1909).

Born at Limoges in 1864, the son of the mayor of the town who was destined subsequently to be elected deputy for Haute-Vienne. Paul Ranson experienced the call to an artistic career early in life and his family gave him their enthusiastic support. After preliminary studies at the École des Arts Décoratifs of Limoges, followed by a short stay at its counterpart in Paris, he entered the Académie Julian. In 1884 he married the woman he was to call "the Light of the Temple" when the studio he occupied at 25 boulevard Montparnasse became the chosen place where the members of the group called the "Nabis" habitually foregathered every Saturday — without abandoning, however, their custom of meeting once a month at a restaurant in the Passage Brady. Ranson participated in the first exhibition of the Nabis in 1891 at the Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville, 47 rue Le Peletier, as he did in all their subsequent exhibitions. "The painting of this theosophist protestant", wrote the Dutchman, Jan Verkade, a former Nabi who after his conversion became Dom Willibrod Verkade, "from the point of view of design more nearly approached the academic and official tendency than the modern symbolist movement to which it was linked by subject. This, no doubt, is why Ranson never achieved the success obtained by the other Nabis". Under the influence of Aristide Maillol, who was at that time devoted to this medium, Ranson composed a great number of cartoons for tapestry. Besides this he produced many compositions which were executed on paper but have been lost. He had built a puppet theatre in his studio for which he wrote no fewer than seven plays which he published in book form under the title of *L'Abbé Prout, Guignol pour les vieux enfants*. Ranson died in Paris on February 20th 1909. It was after this date that his widow founded the Académie Paul Ranson at which the Nabi painters undertook in turn the task of instructing the students.

RETH, Alfred.

Of French nationality, born on February 29th 1884 in Budapest where his father was a doctor. Having matriculated he went to Paris in 1905. He immediately found quarters in the Montparnasse district in the rue Joseph-

Bara and worked at the Académie Jacques-Émile-Blanche (rue d'Assas): where Blanche himself gave him a warm and generous welcome. From 1901 onward Reth had painted many landscapes, nudes and portraits, but at the Académie Jacques-Émile-Blanche he devoted all the powers of his concentration to drawing. In 1906 he travelled to Italy to do further research and was accepted at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. After a stay of only eight months in that country he returned to Paris in 1907. He set up at 146 boulevard du Montparnasse where he found a studio he was to keep till 1935. In certain portraits and compositions and in many drawings from 1908 onwards can be seen the first fruits of a Cubist and abstract art in conjunction with the influences of Hindu art of which he had been a keen student. In 1909, 1910 and 1911 he continued his efforts in this direction. His big abstract drawing, *Relations of Straight Lines and Curves* dates from 1910. In the same year he exhibited three canvases at the Salon d'Automne. In 1911 and 1912, Reth exhibited several paintings at the Salon des Indépendants. In 1912 with Fernand Léger, Jean Metzinger, Le Fauconnier, Robert Delaunay and Kandinsky he exhibited a very important group of paintings in Budapest. In 1913 a one-man exhibition of Cubist works (eighty paintings and drawings) was held at *Der Sturm* in Berlin and in 1914 an exhibition of Cubist works at the Galerie Berthe Weill in Paris. Lugué Poé then commissioned a roll of drawings (5 m. 0.7 cm) and a roll of gouaches of the same dimensions. He joined the French Army and was discharged shortly afterwards. Henceforward he continued to take part in numerous exhibitions both in France and abroad: in 1921 a one-man exhibition in his birthplace, Budapest, in 1926 a retrospective exhibition of Cubism at the Salon des Indépendants, in 1949 at São Paulo, in 1950 at the French exhibition in Copenhagen, in 1951 a one-man exhibition in Stockholm. In 1953 he took part in the exhibition of Cubism 1907-1914 at the Musée d'Art Moderne.

ROSSINÉ, (Wladimir BARANOFF) (1888-1942).

Born at Kherson in Russia on January 1st 1888. He studied at the College of Odessa and later at the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg. From 1902 he exhibited under the name of Baranoff. From 1907 to 1910 he travelled in Finland, Germany and Holland. In 1910 he settled in Paris and at the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon d'Automne and the Tuileries he exhibited paintings which make him one of the precursors of abstract art. In

1914 he returned to Russia and became a teacher of painting and drawing at the Moscow Academy. He invented his "opto-phonic" instrument, a sort of piano on which each key corresponded to a predetermined colour which was projected on to a screen. Thus he gave several recitals of symphonies in colour at the Mayer-Holde Theatre, at the Moscow Opera House and later, on his return to Paris, at the Studio des Ursulines. After 1930 he exhibited almost annually at the Salon des Indépendants paintings and "polytechnic" sculptures, composed of strange materials like drainpipes, springs and varnished zinc. All his life Rossiné was an experimenter: Post-Impressionist, Cubist, Abstract, his work is amazingly varied. The Museums of Modern Art in Moscow, Leningrad and Paris contain examples of his paintings. He was shot by the Germans in 1942. An important retrospective exhibition was devoted to him at the Galerie l'Art Vivant in 1942 (preface and articles by Léon Degand).

ROUAULT, Georges.

Born in Paris at 51 rue de la Villette in a cellar during a bombardment, at the time of the Commune, on May 27th 1871. His father was a master cabinet-maker. Apprenticed to a glass stainer, where he was taught the art of repairing old stained glass, in 1885 the young Rouault attended evening classes at the École des Arts Décoratifs. At the age of twenty he began at the École des Beaux-Arts in Élie Delaunay's studio before passing on to Gustave Moreau and becoming his favourite pupil. After two unsuccessful attempts, he gave up the idea of trying for the Prix de Rome again and left the school. For six successive years he exhibited at the Société des Artistes Français. At that period his preference was for biblical and mythological subjects. He was appointed keeper of the Musée Gustave Moreau on the death of his master in 1898. On returning after a prolonged stay in Haute-Savoie, enforced by ill health, Rouault adopted a new style. Abandoning academic subjects and using a palette dominated by deep blues, he gave intense and tormented expression to themes taken mostly from the world of the circus, the brothel and the law courts. From now on he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of which he was a founder-member. The first general exhibition of his work was held at the Druet Gallery in 1910. Three years later Vollard bought up his studio. After the war Rouault used more brilliant and more varied colours than ever and had a predilection for themes taken from the Gospels. He was attracted by many techniques. He took to engraving and illustra-

ted many books. He practised ceramics, made stained glass windows, produced enamels for the Abbey of Ligugé and sets for Prokoviev's *Prodigal Son* for Diaghilev's Russian Ballet. Fame came to him at last, but he did not allow it to affect his attitude to his work. He arranged for example that the heirs of Ambroise Vollard should be compelled by law to return to their author some eight hundred unfinished canvases of which he burned more than three hundred in the presence of an officer of the courts. At the Venice Biennale in 1948 France officially sent twenty-six paintings and twelve engravings by Rouault. At the instigation of the Centre catholique des Intellectuels Français a solemn homage was paid to the venerable artist on June 6th 1951, the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

ROUSSEL, Ker-Xavier (1867-1944).

Born at Le Chêne (Commune of Lorry-lès-Metz) on December 10th 1867. This doctor's son went to school at the Lycée Condorcet where he became a friend of Edouard Vuillard who was to become his brother-in-law. He was irresistibly attracted by painting and hardly were their studies finished when he dragged Vuillard to the studio of Diogène Ulysse-Napoléon Maillart. Shortly afterwards, Roussel joined the Académie Julian where his masters were Bouguereau and Jules Lefebvre whose strictly traditional teaching did not succeed in alienating the student from the innovators who attracted him. He soon graduated to the group of the "Nabis" and exhibited with them at the Café Volpini from 1899 throughout the duration of the exhibition and at the Galerie Le Barc de Butteville. He retained his sombre manner up to the time of the bicycle tour which he made in small stages from Marseilles to Menton in the company of Maurice Denis, during the course of which the two friends, on their way through Aix-en-Provence, called on Cézanne. It was a decisive visit and a crucial journey. From then Roussel gained the artistic sustenance, the new colours of his palette and the repertoire of landscapes and figures which he stored up along the route in these sunny regions and which he was to use all his life. From that time dates his world of nymphs and fauns, care-free under a cloudless sky, a world painted in a lively, rustic style which is personal to him, though its Attic exterior lacks the power to change these lovable creatures into authentically mythological divinities. Roussel remained faithful to it until the end of his career. Though the requirements of the subject obliged him to abandon it when he painted the curtain for the Comédie des Champs-Élysées, he

stayed faithful to this pastoral style in the large mural decoration entitled *Pax Nutrix* which he executed for the Palais des Nations, at Geneva and in *La Danse* for the Théâtre de Chaillot. Roussel died on June 6th 1944.

SERUSIER, Paul (1865-1927).

Born in Paris in 1865. His father who was a native of Flanders and had been a glover, became director of the Houbigant perfumery. He dreamed of a similar future for his son. Paul Sérusier attended the École Fénelon and the Lycée Fontanes, took his baccalauréat in arts and sciences, after which his father put him into the Marion paper-mill. But the young man confined his interests to letters, philosophy and oriental languages. Thanks, however, to the influence of a friend of the family, Dr. Decaris, he finally found himself at the Académie Julian. There, with several friends (Paul Ranson, Henri-Gabriel Ibels, Pierre Bonnard, Maurice Denis, K.X. Roussel) he formed a small group which discussed philosophy. At the Salon of 1888 he exhibited a very traditional canvas, *Workshop of a Breton Weaver*, but in the summer of the same year during a stay at Pont-Aven he met Gauguin. He was already very much attracted by his theories and decided to ask his advice. Under his guidance Sérusier painted in flat and lively colours on the bottom of a cigar box a synthetically formulated landscape, *Landscape of the Wood of Love*. This picture became his talisman and on his return to Paris he spread the theories of Gauguin at the Académie Julian where he was a studio treasurer. With his friends he founded a group of disciples of "a kind of Gospel of painting" which he baptised the "Nabis" ("prophets" in Hebrew) and of which he was the driving force. Under the influence of Gauguin their Impressionism developed towards Synthetism, then towards a symbolism with Neo-Platonist tendencies. From 1890 onwards Sérusier designed sets for the theatre; he became a collaborator of Lugné-Poé at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. After a visit to Florence he settled in Châteauneuf-du-Faou for the summer and Paris for the winter. A journey across Germany to Prague in 1895 marked a new turning-point in his work. He discovered the School of Religious Art at Beuron, created by Father Didier Lenz, whose artistic theories, based on mathematics, profoundly impressed Sérusier. In 1904 he made a trip to Italy with Maurice Denis and found his former pupil, Verkade and Father Didier at Monte Cassino. On his return he executed paintings for the church at Châteauneuf and translated Father Didier's book, *The Aesthetic of Beuron*, published in 1905. After a visit to

Munich in 1907 he became a teacher at the Académie Paul Ranson in 1908 and wrote *The ABC de la Peinture*. He married in 1912. After 1921 his wife's illness darkened his life, and on October 6th 1927 he died of congestion of the lungs on his way to see her at Morlaix. There was a retrospective exhibition in 1947 at the Musée Galliéra in Paris.

SEYSSAUD, René (1867-1952).

Born in Marseilles on June 7th 1867. He spent his childhood on his ancestral farm at Le Mas Pezet, near Ventoux. Gifted with precocious talent, he first entered the École des Beaux-Arts at Marseilles, and later at the age of eighteen that of Avignon, where he was a pupil of Grivolas whom he astonished by his audacity. At Vaucluse in 1892 he painted *The Chestnuts* which consisted of large areas of pure colour spread on the canvas. Thus he is entitled to a place among the precursors of Fauvism. In 1897 he exhibited for the first time at the Galerie Le Barc de Bouteville, and at that time achieved celebrity. He exhibited pictures at Bernheim's, concerning which an article by Thibaut-Sisson in *Le Temps* in 1901 said, "This solitary and untamed provincial who has slowly developed far away from Paris, is a Master". Seyssaud set up at Saint-Chamas in 1912, leading a family life — poet and ingenuous hermit by turns. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants but obstinately refused the offers of dealers (Vollard). The work he has left is considerable, often brutal, but with a real opulence of colour. He died at Saint-Chamas (Bouches-du-Rhône) on September 26th 1952.

UTRILLO, Maurice (1883-1955).

Born in Paris in the rue du Poteau, on December 26th 1883, the natural son of Suzanne Valadon and a certain Boissy. In 1891 the Spanish writer Miguel Utrillo acknowledged the child who from that time bore his name. Already while still at college Maurice Utrillo showed an immoderate taste for drink and in 1900 he had to be sent off for a time to the Asile Saint-Anne. When he came out, his mother, in the hope of distracting him from his vice, turned his attention to painting for which he at once displayed an entirely unsuspected talent. This artistic activity was to last all his life, punctuated though it was between 1914 and 1921 by several periods in various nursing homes. In 1923 Suzanne Valadon acquired a château for him in the department of Ain and a private house in the avenue Junot where under constant supervision he led a steadier existence. Up to 1906 Utrillo painted landscapes known as

those of his Impressionist or "Montmagny" period, which was followed until 1914 by his "White" period, during which he mixed colours with paste and plaster. It was followed by the "Cloisonné" period when, following the example of his mother, he liked to surround his design with a contour line, and from 1920 his "coloured" period. His success which was slow in coming began with an exhibition of his work at the Galerie Lepoutre in 1919. In 1935 Utrillo married the widow of the collector, Louis Pauwels, who became a painter under the pseudonym of Lucie Valore, and from that time he lived in a comfortable villa at Le Vésinet, that is, when he was not staying at Lavandou, at Dax or on the shores of the Mediterranean, ceaselessly painting between exercises of piety, remaining faithful to his favourite subjects and found nothing incongruous in executing under the burning Midi sun views of the streets of Montmartre covered in snow, from picture-postcards. He designed sets for Diaghilev's Russian Ballet in 1926 and the new sets for *Louise* at the Opéra-Comique in 1948. He died at Dax on November 5th 1955.

VALADON, Maria-Clémentine, known as *Suzanne* (1867-1938).

Born on September 23rd 1867 at Bessines (Haute-Vienne) she was brought to Paris in her infancy and even before reaching adolescence had to take a variety of menial jobs. She was finally engaged as a trapeze artiste by a troupe of itinerant acrobats, an occupation she had to give up as the result of a fall. This was why she became a model, exchanging her real Christian name for that of Suzanne. Among the artists she posed for were Puvis de Chavannes and Renoir. She began to draw very early without having had any previous instruction. At the age of fifteen she had drawn her own portrait in pastel. In 1883 she gave birth to a child who was to become the painter Utrillo. Having had the opportunity to discover Suzanne Valadon's innate talent, Toulouse-Lautrec introduced her to Degas who, though normally sparing of praise, bestowed plenty upon the young woman and extracted from her a pledge that she would continue to persevere in her own individual way. This she did. On occasion she exhibited with the Impressionists at the Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville and later at Vollard's. In 1896 she married Paul Moussis who was comfortably off. Hardships were over, and they lived together with Utrillo at Montmagny near Montmorency. Subsequently she was separated from Paul Moussis and in 1909 married the painter André Utter. Through him she became acquainted with a circle of

avant-garde painters which was her first contact with such a group. She died in April 1938. A retrospective exhibition of her work was organized at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in May 1948.

VALLOTTON, Félix-Edmond (1865-1925).

Born at Lausanne on December 28th 1865. He left school and went to Paris in 1882 and entered the Académie Julian. He first exhibited at the Salon in 1885 without attracting attention, but in 1887 his portrait of *M. Jasinski holding his Hat* did not pass unobserved. At this period he earned a living by restoring old paintings. He collaborated in the *Revue Blanche* in which he published not only drawings but articles on art. Between 1891 and 1897 he executed dry-points, etchings, lithographs and especially wood engravings. In 1893 and the following year he exhibited with the "Nabis" at the Galerie le Barc de Boutteville and in 1906 took part in a demonstration by the painters of this group at Bernheim the younger's, side by side with Roussel, Bonnard, Vuillard, Sérusier, etc. He differed from these painters in his preoccupation with austere, stark and, at times rather heavy, realism. He produced a wealth of engravings, portraits and caricatures. The catalogue of his works lists 1,329 canvases. He also wrote novels and plays. He died in Paris on December 28th 1925.

VALMIER, Georges (1885-1937).

Born on April 10th 1885, at Angoulême. He entered the École des Beaux-Arts at the age of twenty under Luc-Olivier Merson and stayed there four years. After this he worked alone. His admiration for Cézanne influenced him in the direction of Cubism. In 1911 he painted prismatic portraits which offer an undeniable analogy with the experiments of Braque and Picasso whom he did not know. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants. In 1914 he was called up at Toul and went through the whole war before returning to civilian life about the middle of 1919. His style had developed and tended at that time towards an analytic and objective expressionism. In 1921 at Léonie Rosenberg's he exhibited collages and began to design a whole series of stage sets such as those for *Cyprien*, or *Love at Eighteen* by Georges Pillement, *Golden Head* by Paul Claudel etc. Valmier took part in several international exhibitions and in that of the "Surindépendants" in 1930 and belonged to the "Abstraction-Création" group. He was commissioned by the state to execute three large panels for the French Railways pavilion at the 1937 Exhibition. He died in Paris on March 25th 1937.

VALTAT, Louis (1869-1952).

Born at Dieppe on August 8th 1869. A few years later his parents settled at Versailles where he received a classical education. In 1888 he attended the Académie Julian and afterwards spent a short time at Gustave Moreau's studio. He first exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1889. The periods he spent in the south of France, at Banyuls, at Collioures where Maillol was working, and later in Spain (1895), in Italy (1902) and in Algeria (1903), sustained his taste for bright colours which led him to figure among the Fauves at the Salon d'Automne in 1905. He never ceased to enjoy his repeated visits to Brittany and Normandy until an illness in 1948 deprived him of his eyesight during the last years of his life and prevented him from practising his art. Valtat died in Paris on January 2nd 1952. An important retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Musée Galliera in November 1956.

VAN DONGEN, Kees.

He was born on January 26th 1877 at Delfshaven near Rotterdam. His father was a sailor. His gifts enabled the boy to enter a school of decorative art. There he was far from assiduous, cheerfully abandoning academic instruction in order to draw according to his own taste on the quaysides of the harbour or in the country. At the age of twenty he came to Paris where he took various jobs in order to keep alive. He was by turns market-porter, house-painter and free-lance draughtsman whose caricatures were published by the *Assiette au Beurre* or other satirical weeklies. During the early days of his life in France he paid frequent visits to his own country but he always left it to return to Paris. In 1907 he settled in Montmartre at the "Bateau-Lavoir" (see p. 73) where he mixed with Picasso and his friends. From there he emigrated to Montparnasse. In his studio in the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, he liked to hold farcical reunions. He had his quarters there until the war. For a long time past he had adopted a palette of violent and contrasting colours which had classed him among representatives of Fauvism. He was to use the same excessive technique in portraits. In his landscapes, on the other hand, not his early ones, but those which were subsequently inspired by Morocco, Venice, Egypt, Versailles, Paris etc., he showed as much delicacy as moderation.

VILLON, Jacques (DUCHAMP, Gaston).

Born on July 31st 1875 at Danville (Eure). The son of a solicitor, he himself began as a lawyer's clerk in Rouen. He gave up this kind

of career in 1895, left for Paris, entered Cormon's studio and earned a living by drawing for the newspapers. Without abandoning painting, he took up engraving from 1899. Under the patronage of Frantz Jourdain he was appointed member of the advisory Committee of the Salon d'Automne. He was influenced for a time by Fauvism but abandoned it for Scientific Cubism. His studio at Puteaux indeed became one of the centres of the movement. In 1913 he instituted the "Golden Section" Exhibition there. Between 1914 and 1929 Villon devoted himself principally to reproducing the works of Bonnard, Cézanne, Dufy, Monet, Picasso and Segonzac by aquatints. In 1930 he went to America where thanks to the support of Walter Pach, the critic, his painting received a great acclaim. The exodus of 1940 took him to Gascony. There he painted landscapes in which he developed the art of investing the rigour of the radiating cones formed by his geometric lines with the fresh colour values so beloved of the Impressionists. At the age of seventy Villon has become and remains one of the leaders of the younger generation. In 1956 he won the International Prize for Painting at the Venice Biennale.

VLAMINCK, Maurice de.

Born in rue Pierre-Lescot in Paris on April 4th 1876. He is, as his name indicates, of Flemish origin. His parents gave piano lessons. In 1879 they settled at Le Vésinet. At the age of nineteen Maurice became a racing cyclist. This did not prevent him being madly enthusiastic about painting, which he practised under the instructions of a certain Henri Rigal and a man named Robichon. Before he was twenty he was already married, with a family. On returning from the regiment he lived, as best he could, by playing the violin. It was then that he met Derain, thanks to whom he was to make the acquaintance of Matisse. He took part in the movement known as Fauvism. His characteristic manner and his romantic style developed early, being composed of violent contrasts, tormented atmospheres and stormy skies whose tragic light illuminates landscapes of clay and snow punctuated by leaden-coloured walls and black, twisted tree trunks. He is also possessed of an alternative palette which he uses to paint the attractive bouquets from his garden flowers. Since 1925 he has lived in the country near Verneuil-sur-Avre at Rueil-la-Gadelière. He has a vast number of pictures to his credit. He has also written several books of memoirs in a combative vein: *Tournant dangereux*, *Haute Folie* and *Poliment*.

VUILLARD, Edouard (1868-1940).

Born on November 11th 1868 at Cuiseaux (Saône-et-Loire) he was ten years old when his migrated to Paris. His father died five years later. The boy did creditably at the Lycée Condorcet and proposed to prepare for the entrance examination at Saint-Cyr Military Academy. It was his fellow pupil Ker-Xavier Roussel, his future brother-in-law who helped him to find his true vocation, painting. When he left school Vuillard entered the studio of Diogène Maillart; then he met one of his other former fellow pupils from the Lycée Condorcet, Maurice Denis, thanks to whom he was to know Bonnard. Together they attended the Académie Julian. Vuillard followed the courses of Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury. He was subsequently admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts where the severity of Gérôme and the nature of the subjects perpetually dear to Neo-Classical art had the effect of repelling him. Conversely he felt all the more attracted by a

group of young artists who dreamed of an art liberated both from die-hard academicism and Impressionism which was not intellectual enough for their taste. So Vuillard followed the men who had baptised themselves with the name of "Nabis" and who already included Maurice Denis, Ranson, Bonnard, Vallotton etc. He did not by any means share the Nabis' enthusiasm for Symbolism and claimed the right to follow the dictates of his inspiration. His first exhibition was held in 1891 in the rooms of the newly founded *Revue Blanche*. He employed a composite technique which is peculiar to him, in which oil, gouache, distemper and pastel used together give his works the matt quality of a fresco. He never abandoned this medium. Success and recognition did not fail to come his way. Vuillard, elected a member of the French Academy, died at La Baule on June 21st 1940.

The original French notes for this volume were compiled by Maurice Bez.

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